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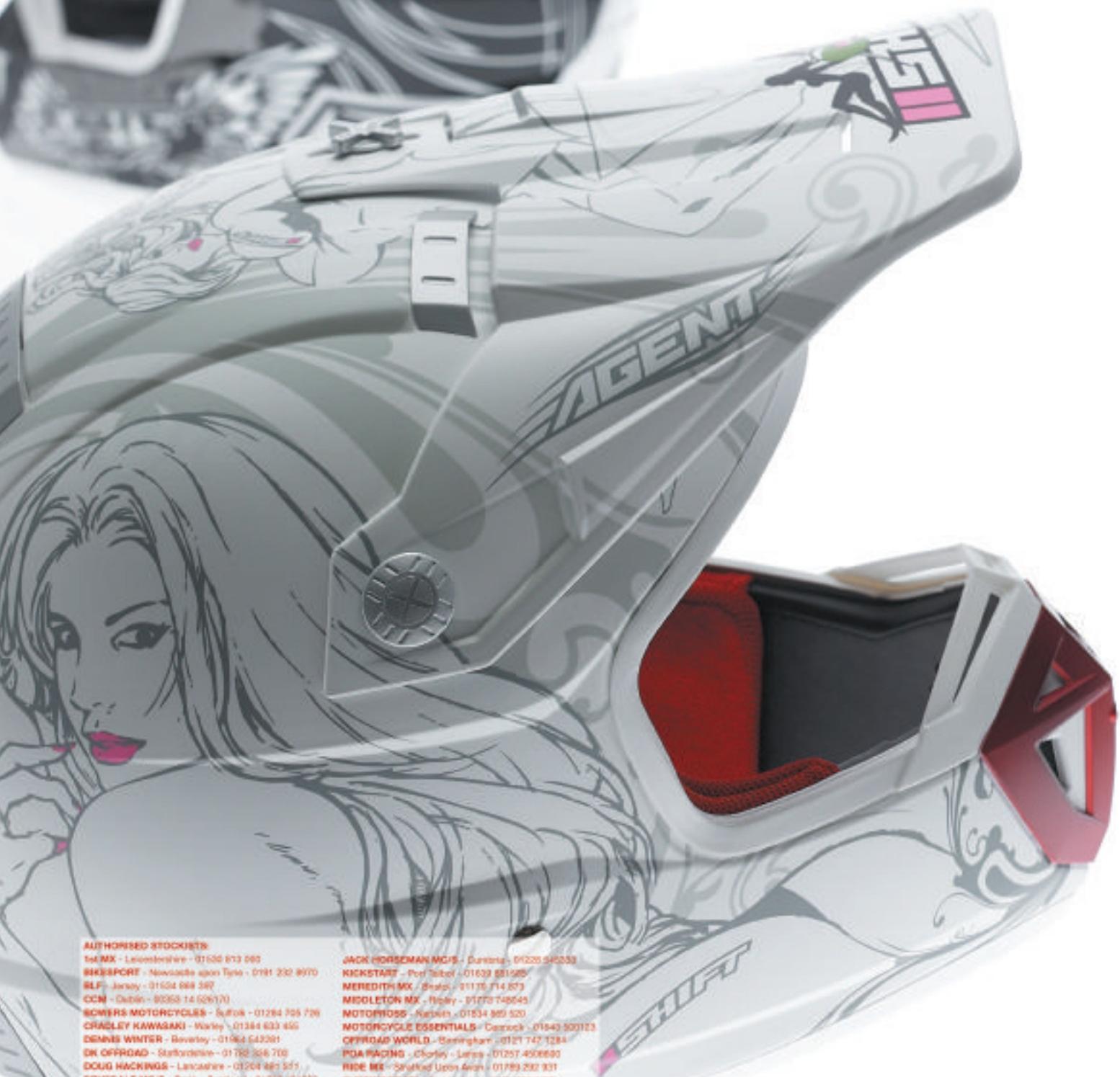
COVER: British MX2 hero Tommy Searle
© SUTTY

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Mallory Park's awesome British GP
© SUTTY

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COMMENT

You've got to love a good rumour. Dave Thorpe leaving Honda for Kawasaki, Cannondale producing a world-beating off-road bike, Stefan Everts making his GP comeback in '09, White Lightning being made out of apples, Mallory Park to host the 2008 Motocross des Nations...

Some rumours turn out to be true, some seem plausible enough to be possible and some are just flat-out nonsense. So what about the last one? Will the MXdN shift from Donington to Mallory. On one level it doesn't matter – whether it's near Derby or near Leicester is to a certain extent irrelevant, the biggest event in world motocross is coming to Britain. And we should be happy. And we are.

But personally I'd be even happier if this particular rumour turned out to be true. I was at Donington last year and at Mallory last weekend and there is a world of difference between the two places. Obviously there are some striking similarities. Both tracks are custom-made with bugger all in the way of natural elevation changes, both tracks are based at Midlands' road race circuits, both tracks have a great infrastructure and both tracks have the road network necessary for speedy entry and exit.

But it's not the qualities they share that matter, it's the way they differ that – surprise, surprise – makes all the difference. Last year's British GP was for me a strangely sterile experience. Donington had very little in the way of atmosphere – mainly due to the fact that unless you had the right pass the viewing areas were too far from the track. It was like we were being kept at arm's length from the action and I like to experience my GP's shoulder-to-shoulder with the next fan, hanging over the chestnut paling, not watching and applauding from a polite distance. It may work for MotoGP but it doesn't work for motocross GP.

We have to be realistic. The halcyon days of grands prix at Foxhill or Hawkstone or Farleigh Castle are long gone and at this level custom-built tracks are here to stay. But at times it felt like I was at an old-school GP close enough to see through Swordy's goggles into his eyes, close enough to almost touch Billy Mac as he motored past, certainly close enough to get showered with roost as Ken De Dycker unexpectedly drifted wide and squared off a corner in front of me. That's what British GPs are all about!

Unfortunately, ever since John Horler abandoned ship at Foxhill, British GPs also seem to be about promoters losing sufficient money to never want to run a world championship round again – hence the reason we've had six GPs at five different venues with five different organisers over the last five years. I spoke to Gareth Hockey of RHL Activities on Sunday afternoon and at the time he seemed confident he'd managed to make a small profit. A few days later and a modest reward for a whole heap of hard work became, in his words, "a substantial loss".

Gareth has identified his own reasons (see lead story) why a weekend attendance of nearly 43,000 didn't drag the event out of the red and they're totally valid. But how about this for a bombshell? The ACU didn't put a penny into the event! With all its resources 'the governing body for motorcycle sport throughout Britain' (that's what it says on its website) was prepared to sit back and let RHL sink or swim. A successful British GP is in everyone's interest – that's the fans, the industry (yep, the media's part of that) and most of all the ACU. The fans helped by turning out in their thousands and we (the media) helped with pre-event publicity – so where was the ACU's contribution (by ACU I mean the corporate body, not the hard-working individuals within it)?

If we want to hold our heads up as a major player in off-road sport then a British GP is vital and after bouncing around from pillar to post over the last few years we have to find a permanent base for our round of the world MX championship AND someone who's prepared to lay their balls on the line to promote it. Fortunately – and no thanks to the ACU – with Mallory Park and RHL Activities we may well just have found both...

Sean



BRIGHT FUTURE!

RHL ACTIVITIES COMMIT TO HONOURING FIVE-YEAR GP DEAL

Do you want the good news first or the bad news? Well the bad news is that despite a huge weekend turn-out of almost 43,000 spectators for Mallory Park's British GP, promoters RHL Activities made "substantial losses".

The good news is that RHL's Gareth Hockey is committed to honouring their five-year deal – which includes staging the 2011 Motocross des Nations – with series promoter Youthstream and there will be a British GP at Mallory Park in 2009.

Up until the '08 event, since its revival in 2004 after three years off the world championship calendar the British GP has been staged by four different promoters at four different venues. Apart from Steve Dixon coming back for another crack in 2006 at Matterley Basin after 2005's GP at Matchams, each time financial losses have forced the promoters to abandon plans for a second attempt.

But in a phone call four days after the GP Gareth stated his commitment to both the event and the venue. "Mallory want us back, we want to be back and Youthstream want us back," says Gareth. "It will be so much easier for us next year because we'll learn from our mistakes."

Undoubtedly we'll be back next year, we just have to get over feeling pissed off."

The reason Gareth feels "pissed off" is because of what he sees as a lack of support from within the industry. "It's frustration that the industry doesn't appear to want to support the sport. Not one manufacturer would even take an advert in the programme – the £500 from each of them would have made a big difference."

Gareth's also identified the amount of complimentary tickets he was asked to provide as one of the main reasons why this year's GP made a loss. By RHL's estimations a staggering 6,000 people didn't have to pay to watch Sunday's championship races.

But there were also plenty of highs for Gareth and his team over the weekend. "For me I've not felt such an atmosphere at a GP since the days of Jobe and Thorpe at Hawkstone."

Gareth's quick to play down rumours that the 2008 MX des Nations will move from Donington to Mallory – instead he plans to continue to grow the British GP and deliver an awesome event three years down the line when he's contracted with Youthstream to stage the World Cup of motocross.

"It will be unbelievable. The two years we've got in between will give us time to fine tune everything. If we were offered it this year like any MX fans we'd say yes but realistically we'll be in a much better position in 2011."

DOBBER DIGS DEEP

FORMER WORLD CHAMP TAKES ON MARATHON CHARITY CYCLE

He's won a world 125cc championship and taken a GP victory at Namur with both collarbones busted but now Jamie Dobber is facing possibly his toughest challenge yet, cycling 1000 miles from the Catalonian MotoGP to Donington Park for the British MotoGP – in just 10 days.

"I don't know if it's a stupid idea or not," admits Dobber. "We start at Barcelona and do one lap of the track and then we head north to Donington where we'll do one lap of the track to finish. All proceeds go to the Make A Wish Foundation which as you know is a very good cause."

By the time this issue of DBR hits the shelves Jamie – accompanied by brother Julian, his friend Matt Groves and Emmerdale star Kelvin Fletcher – will be halfway through the epic journey. Other big names will also be joining them along the way including Keith Flint from The Prodigy and speedway rider Chris Harris.

"I'm looking forward to it," adds Jamie. "I'm very nervous but also very excited. I've done enough cycling to get through it but not as much as I'd have liked to have done. I'm not sure how enjoyable it's going to be – I reckon some parts of the day I'm going to want to die and others you'll go over the top of a hill and it'll be 'wow, this is cool'."

"At the end of the day I'm not an athlete anymore, I've been sat behind a desk for four years so to do this will be a huge accomplishment."

For more details and to make a donation hook up to www.cycleofwishes.com



*"It's all reet Dobber but
it ain't as comfy as
Mandy Dingle..."*

WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

CARL NUNN'S BRITISH GP RACE KIT

If you were present at Mallory Park for the British Grand Prix you'll have seen that Suso Suzuki's Carl Nunn was wearing a patriotic little No Fear get-up for the two points-paying motos on Sunday afternoon.

If you thought to yourself 'Hmmmm, nice kit, I'm gonna get me some of that action right there' or you've just simply fancied getting in Carl's pants for some time now then let us save you going to any effort because we're offering you – our loyal readers – the chance to own the very same race kit Carl wore in moto two at Mallory. All you have to do is be in with a chance of winning Nunny's dirty kit is answer a 'Suso simple*' Carl Nunn-related question.

In what year did Carl Nunn first wear No Fear race kit? Was it:

- A) 2008
- B) 1998
- C) 1988
- D) 1978
- E) A garden gate

When you think you know the answer you can either hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com and follow the links to answer it there or maybe you'd like to write it down on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope along with your name, address and a daytime telephone number then send it to us at...

'Carl Nunn's British GP MX2 race two No Fear super-patriotic race kit comp', 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancashire LA4 4AG.

The first correct answer drawn from Marge's massive lunchbox – once he's emptied it of Ginsters products – on the closing date of July 10 will win Carl's kit.

* © TMX 2008



DTTOCCM!

LASHINGS OF BRITISHNESS ALL ROUND

In a move even more British than the Band of the Coldstream Guards playing Rule Britannia with stiff upper lips at the Royal Albert Hall, British bike building legends CCM have appointed British motocross legend Dave Thorpe as their new sporting director.

Four-time world champ Dave will play a major part in shaping the CCM team in the run-up to a full assault on the MX1 and MX2 world titles in 2009. The reigning Vet world champion, who won three 500cc titles for Honda in the '80s and managed the British MXDN winning effort in '94, will help with rider selection and be responsible for training the team among other duties.

"From what I have seen so far, CCM are serious about moving their team to the next level," says Dave. "It is great for me to have the chance to work with a British team that is hungry for world success."

"I am confident that I can put the right things in place to make CCM a real contender at both world and British level. It is an exciting challenge and one that motivates me greatly."

PEDIGREECHUM!

DEPUTY DAWG'S BACK ON BOARD...

Peaches and cream, bacon and eggs, Little Chef and overdraft, cider and cider. Some combinations are quite simply a marriage made in heaven and we're delighted to add another to the list – Sutty and DBR!

Oh yes, after three months of threatening 2am phone calls, packages of doggie droppings through his letterbox and decapitated pigeons in his kitchen (admittedly, his cats Jay and Bob are responsible for the headless roof rats), we've finally persuaded the former Deputy Dawg to come back to the fold! All of which explains why there are rather a lot of Sutty bylines in this month's mag.

Y'see, DBR is a bit like Royston Vasey – you'll never leave...





WIN!WIN!WIN!

2008 RM125 MUST BE WON!

Not so very long ago it looked like the game was up for high-revvin', sweet-sounding, two-strokes. But reports of their death were greatly exaggerated and in the right hands a stroker's still a potent weapon – go to any club meeting and you'll get a whiff of pre-mix and thanks to the DEP championship there's even a high-profile race series dedicated to two-smokers.

For the second year on the trot we've joined forces with Suzuki GB to offer one lucky reader the chance to win a brand-spanking-new yellow rocketship – this time around it's a RM125! And what's more, if you win – and you're fast enough – you could even earn a place in the Suzuki RM125cc Cup and have a chance at winning a 2009 model at the DEP series finale. That's what's known in the trade as a double bonus!

The competition kicked off in last month's mag, continues in this issue and then signs off

in August. In each of the three special competition editions we're asking a simple Suzuki-related question – all you have to do is work out the correct answer, send it in and keep your pinkies crossed.

Each correct answer is a valid entry so if you miss a competition issue you can still enter and, even better, if you get all three competition issues you get three separate shots at winning the RM125! That's what's known in the trade as a triple bonus!

You can either wait until the August issue and stuff all your entries into one envelope or just send your entries in one at a time – all we ask is that entries are submitted on official entry forms so no computer scans, photocopies or crayoned efforts etc!

Don't miss August's DBR for your third and final chance to win...

SORTed!

WIN A RIDE IN THE RM125 CUP

The RM125 is still one of the best two-stroke weapons around and buying one this year gives you entry into the UK's newest and most exciting off-road race series!

Qualifying couldn't be easier...

- ◆ Simply buy a brand-new Suzuki RM125 from an authorised Suzuki dealer
- ◆ Compete in eight races during 2008 (registering your results online)
- ◆ The top 40 entrants will go forward to the Suzuki

Championship race at the DEP finals in 2008

◆ Riders of RM125s from a different year may also enter (subject to a one-off charge of £50)

Easy huh? If you're already a SORT club member just log-in or if not simply visit the SORT website at www.suzukioffroadteam.co.uk and add in any race results you've had in the club scene. Then pick your best eight results to secure your place in the national standings and be in with a chance of lifting the Suzuki RM125 Cup and winning a 2009 RM125!



QUESTION #2

HOW MANY WORLD MX TITLES DID THE LEGENDARY ROGER DE COSTER WIN FOR SUZUKI?

- A) Three B) Five
C) Seven D) Eight

Answer :

Name :

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Postcode :

Daytime contact number :

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Closing date for entries is **August 7**.

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Trevor Pope Motorcycles	Gosport	Hampshire	PO12 4TD	02392 521111



LEARN FROM THE KING

STEFAN Everts training camps hit the UK for the first time ever

Stefan Everts knows a thing or three about how to ride a dirt scooter properly. And now he's no longer racing scrambles bikes for pennies, Stefan's willing to share some of his knowledge to a select few individuals – that'll be the Red Bull factory KTM team riders and anyone lucky enough to own a 2008 or '09 KTM MXer bigger than a 65 that's been bought and collected from an official UK KTM dealer.

Stefan's pair of one-day schools will be run at the awesome Tony Moto practice facility in Hampshire on August 27 and 28. With only 20 places available per day it's imperative that potential pupils log on to www.ktm.co.uk to download and complete an application form for the school that costs £185 to attend.

Groups will be split into engine sizes and no more than 10 riders will be allowed on the circuit at any one time to ensure that everyone gets as much advice and top tips as possible.

KTM UK expects that demand for the 40 places will be high and with the cut-off date for applications being June 30 it's advised anybody interested in attending should get a move on...



Whatley wins at Dean Moor

GORDON CROCKARD

HAPPY CHAPPY!

GORDY'S FINALLY GOT HIS VISA AND THINGS ARE LOOKING UP STATESIDE FOR THE PRIDE OF ULSTER...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by hoppenworld.com

Hey ho! I'm on the balcony of my apartment here witnessing a serious thunderstorm – so far it's been going for over six hours. Yesterday was the hottest day yet this year and today it's lashing! I'd planned to ride my bike today but I can write that off as I don't think the Husky or its pilot would survive a lightning strike. Anyway, enough talk about the weather you'll agree...

This month has been mega. I flew home to the US Consulate in Belfast and got my American visa approved. Happy days as now I have a legal permit to be here in America which means I can finally get paid and it also reduces the interrogation at immigration at the airport every time I enter this fine nation. I do like it here and enjoy a lot of aspects of the culture – nowhere near as much as William Mackenzie though but it's still a cool place to spend my time.

I had 10 days at home in Northern Ireland on my trip to get the visa completed and in that time I was real lucky to catch a heap of things that were coincidentally happening while I was in town. First up, on the same day I got back an old friend who'd moved to Hungary to work was home for a break so I met up to catch up. The next day was the NW200 road race on the north coast in Portrush and a good friend kindly invited me to join him at his table in the corporate VIP suite. Although I was knackered from travelling, jet lag and talking with my Hungary mate all night I surely had reason to keep my eyes open as the racing was electric. The way the travelling worked out, by Saturday night I hadn't been to bed since Wednesday. The day was just the place to catch up with everyone so thank you very much Mr Gavin Boyd for having me there.

I then headed up the country a bit further to meet up with my girlfriend Amy. She had organised a weekend in Donegal at her grandfather's house and I enjoyed a couple of days in the excellent surroundings there are there. I even had a swim in the sea the weather was that good. It was absolutely freezing but once you were in you got over the initial shock.

Monday I had over three months of post to work my way through and also some documents to prepare for the visa interview. Tuesday saw me walk out of the US Embassy with a smile on my face and a visa in my hand and onward I

headed to a fund-raising charity grass-track race which was being held in the evening at Balnahinch. I didn't have a chance to race but was happy to be there spectating.

I was out on the bike the next day practising on the same course I'd ridden since last November but now it was dry and really, really fast. The trees were all out in bloom too so that made it harder. It was a great feeling whizzing through narrow forest but obviously highly dangerous if you got out of control a little. I've had a couple of big enough smashes and thankfully haven't been injured in any of them.

I got to see some crashing action at the Red Bull soap box race in Belfast at the Stormont parliament buildings. Incredible location for it and as Red Bull sponsor me I got the VIP treatment again for the second time in one week. It was held on a Sunday and had a huge crowd attend.

My mate Sammy married Louise on Tuesday and I got lucky to be there to see that, so congratulations and thanks for having me there. I flew the next day to Cincinnati and raced one of the hottest races ever on the Sunday. I was 12th and blistered up pretty good but I'm healing well. Your body adapts to the heat the more you're in it so my conditioning will continue to improve while I'm here. I'm really pleased with how my training off the bike is going – that's one aspect that I do have complete control of so the sky's the limit in that department. I'm doing all my own nutrition too so it's kind of verging on boot camp with the level of discipline in the training and the diet.

The GNCC series takes a two-month break in July and August so depending on some pending factors yet to be finalised I may get back for some events I'd choose to do. We still have no BMW equipment here in the US to test or race and I don't know when it may arrive so it's a little tough to plan ahead exactly – the worst thing I could do is go and double book myself for something. But one thing's for sure, whatever I end up doing I'll be fit and strong for it.

I'll end now on that note as I like the way it reads. You'll either believe me or think that I'm just talking myself up. Take it as you want...

The Fanta Bomb



KRISTIAN AID!

CCM AND KRISTIAN WHATLEY JOIN FORCES FOR THE LATEST ROUND OF THE MMX SERIES

Words and photo by Toby Fuller

By running 1-3 in the Under 21 class races at Dean Moor in Cumbria, Kristian Whatley closes to within two points of series leader Alex Snow in the championship standings. Making his debut for CCM and wearing locally produced Wulfsport clothing, Kristian really gives the Cumbrian fans what they've come for by entertaining them in both races with a dominant display of hard riding.

After making light work of early leader Shane Carless in moto one to take control of the race until the finish, Kristian has his work cut out in moto two as he comes from last to third after crashing on lap one. With Whatley on the charge from the back of the pack it's Ashley Greedy – now riding an RHL Suzuki – who takes a start-to-finish win ahead of KTM UK's Snow who continues to hold the series lead in his rookie year with Roger Magee's talented team.

In the Open class Pioneer Yamaha's Cumbrian charger Wayne Smith takes a double win on home soil – and rocks! – as he edges out fellow Cumbrian and Relentless Suzuki rider Jamie Law in motos one and two to extend his series lead in the former four-stroke only championship. Jordan Rose and Neville Bradshaw score a third and a DNF apiece leaving Blackpool's Jim Murro to take third overall on his STR Honda.

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STEPHEN SWORD

DOMESTIC BLISS!

SWORDY SPENDS A LITTLE TIME WITH JODIE BEFORE ROCKING OUT AT MALLORY PARK AT THE BRITISH GP!

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Sutty

Another busy month has passed and it was mainly a good one apart from a couple of lows. The first stop on the race calendar was round four of the British championship at Lyng. After my first overall win – in over two years – at Torrington last month I was eager to repeat that performance.

The track was in good condition and a great crowd had turned out to watch. The day started and ended the way I had planned although in practice I took a small crash and as I was picking up the bike another rider ran over my bad ankle. I could have done without that but it was nothing that an ice pack and some painkillers wouldn't help. I took my first pole position of the year which felt good.

All day I felt awesome and knew that it was going to be my day. I had a couple of laps battling with Shaun in race two which was good, apart from that it was a flawless day and one that made me a happy chappy. It was a great day also for my mechanic Ryan and the team as they've been working so hard lately.

The following week and I was off to Bulgaria for a GP. I flew out of Heathrow which was handy as it's only 25 minutes from me. I was a little nervous departing from Terminal 5 as to whether my kit would get lost but it all landed safely in Bulgaria. The track is one that I like so I was really pumped to do well as always.

Qualifying was good and I finished second in my heat which gave me third pick of the gate for Sunday's races. It was important to be on the inside for the start as you stood no chance of taking the holeshot anywhere after gate 10. I finished a solid fourth in race one but knew for race two that I had the pace to run up front. I ended the first lap in third and I was feeling good until some bad luck came my way.

Some of you may have seen it on TV... The handlebar mounting bolt snapped which meant I couldn't steer and this resulted in me jumping off the track. If the bolt had come loose then I would have got more warning and felt there was something up but it just sheared off as I entered a corner after a drop off. It was a freak thing and nobody you can point the finger at – especially not my mechanic. The way I look at it is you can fix a bike quickly but injuries take much longer.

My flight back wasn't until Monday afternoon so we stayed in Sofia on Sunday night. I much prefer to get home Sunday if I can but the flight times didn't match for the way back. It was a short week that week as Jodie and I were flying back out to Italy on Thursday for the Mantova GP. We left sunny England to be greeted with rain in Italy. The track took the rain well so conditions were not too bad on Saturday. I qualified second behind Tony so I was happy with that and again a good grid position for Sunday.

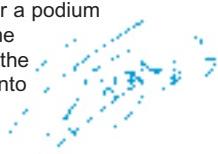
A bad start in race one saw me in 12th position on the opening lap and I fought through to sixth at the end. I wasn't enjoying the track much and wanted to ride better in the second race. Again the start was not good but I was coming through well. I passed Rui Goncalves then in the next corner he just T-boned me. We both went down hard – I landed heavy on my head and shoulder and was slightly disorientated as to what had happened. I'm all up for a bit of aggressive riding but this was a crazy move. I was pretty mad after which is not like me but I was just disappointed not to score points.

After seven weekends of racing we all had a weekend off to recharge the batteries. I put in a hard week's riding and training with DT and then had the weekend off. Jodie and I just chilled out, we did some shopping where she spent most of my bonus money. We went to the movies, had a bite to eat and did some bits around the house. I was soon all recharged and ready for Mallory.

The British GP was finally here – my first one since the Isle of Wight in 2005. All week I was pumped up and couldn't wait. First of all I would like to thank the fans – you guys were awesome and every corner of every lap you were cheering. The track was tough but with the time they had to build it I thought they'd done a good job. My starts let me down terribly – I battled through in both races but my second race was the better one and I ended up fifth overall.

I was obviously looking for a podium but, as I said, my starts let me down big time. Thanks to all the fans, you made a good day into a great day for me!

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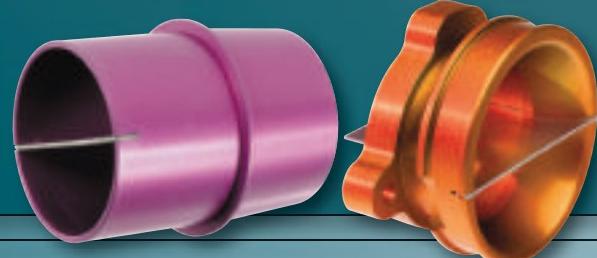


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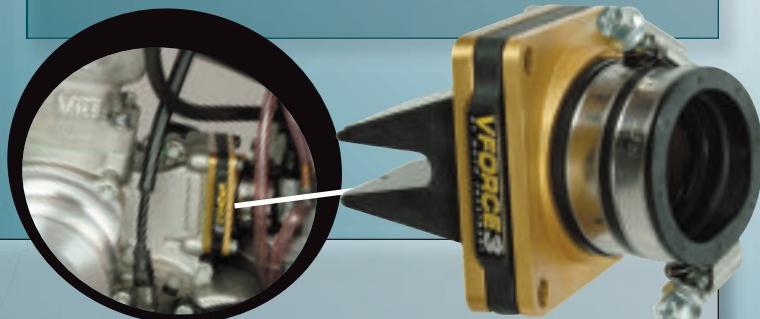


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NEIL PRINCE

WHETHER HE'S SPANNERING ON BIKES, RUNNING A B&B FOR THE TEAM OR WRESTLING WITH AN AWNING, THERE'S NEVER A DULL MOMENT FOR MONSTER CAS HONDA MANAGER NEIL PRINCE...

Words and photo by JP O'Connell

How important can a manager be? Surely, if a rider's good then a rider's good...isn't he? Any of you who follow our national football team will know different. Individually some of the best players on the planet, collectively and under the wrong manager...bunch of arse!

As well as overseeing the riders there's a whole heap more that keeps the manager busy. DBR razzed down to Torrington, prised Monster CAS Honda team manager Neil Prince away from bagging up Billy Mac's dirty kit (we're not joking!) and found out what it's all about.

DBR: Introduce yourself to us.

NP: "My name's Neil Prince and I'm the team manager for CAS Honda."

DBR: Are you married with 2.4 children or single?

NP: "I'm married to Michelle with no kids yet...my mother-in-law says I'm a Jaffa!"

DBR: How did you first get into motocross?

NP: "My brother used to ride a bike that my dad built and when I was five I went along to watch one day. My brother had a bit of a temper on him and when he crashed he went a bit crazy, kicking the bike and stuff, so my dad got the bike and said to me 'right you can have a go' and that was it really. My brother took up fishing and I kept on with the bikes!"

DBR: How old are you?

NP: "I'm 35."

DBR: What were the highlights of your career?

NP: "I won the schoolboy championships and then moved up to the big bikes, winning the British 125cc championship in 1994."

DBR: How did you get the job with CAS?

NP: "I rode for Harry Ainsworth [owner of CAS] in '99 and then moved into training schools with Harry's son, Scott, as well as riding the 500 GPs. After a couple of years I was given the opportunity to run the team and that's where I am today."

DBR: What do your duties at CAS involve?

NP: "It's difficult to explain. People will see me working on the bikes, cleaning the truck, basically anything that needs doing. I'm not the sort of person who stands back bossing people about, telling them to do this and that. The people I have, they know what needs doing for us to go racing next weekend and I leave them to it.

"Ultimately, I make the calls to make everything happen but I also work with the guys as well. Some of

the work is office based – I have to send emails and stuff like that – but we have Sam Fox who sorts out the sponsors, hospitality at the races and helps me out with the logistical side of things. The way my crew works is quite unbelievable, without them I am nothing."

DBR: Where is CAS based?

NP: "In Belgium near Lommel."

DBR: Do you have much input on the rider selection for the team?

NP: "Yes, that's down to me and Harry. We like riders who want to go racing, people who are passionate."

DBR: What will a typical week consist of during the season?

NP: "Tonight we will pack up and everyone will head off to my house where we will stay, luckily my wife is very understanding...she could have thrown me out a long time ago! All day Monday will be spent at my personal workshop cleaning all the bikes and gear off.

"By Tuesday afternoon the guys should be just about ready to get the motors back in the bikes and on Wednesday they will drive to Plymouth to catch the ferry over to Spain for the GP. I also prepare Mike Brown's practice bike and will usually go riding with him a couple of times in the week before I catch a flight on Friday to get to the GP."

DBR: On race day what does the CAS team manager have to do?

NP: "I will try and talk to our sponsors as much as I can but I'm always looking out in case someone has missed something, trying to make sure everything is kept tidy. I'm not a bad mechanic so I will end up helping out with that. It's like I said, I can't just stand back barking at everyone that they have five minutes to get something done, I want to be part of getting it done."

DBR: How did the deal with Monster come off?

NP: "That came about through Mike and Jamie Dobb. Monster was looking to get their brand into the UK and Mike is good friends with one of the Monster USA guys. I'd also been hassling the guys in the US about it as what would look better than sponsoring the two British number one bikes?"

DBR: Has the Monster sponsorship had an impact on how things are run within the team?

NP: "No, not really. I mean we've brought a new sponsor into the sport and a new image to our bikes. People have to understand how much it costs to go racing – nobody has any idea just how much Harry Ainsworth puts into this team."

DBR: Is your job like that of a football manager – could poor rider results put your job in jeopardy?

NP: "No, if we have bad results then there's a reason for it and it's up to us to put it right."

DBR: How many weekends will you spend at home now that the season has kicked off?

NP: "Two weekends all year...my wife reminds me of that every week!"

DBR: What do you do during the off-season?

NP: "Normally we will go to Florida as we have a house out there – not that I'm that rich, there's a few of us who bought it! We love it out there, I get to relax and I'll go riding pretty much every day."

DBR: Does Michelle travel to the races with you?

NP: "No, she does come to some of them to watch but the thing is I don't really have any time as I'm so busy and focussed on the job."

DBR: Which is your favourite GP of the season?

NP: "The last one! No, seriously, probably the British one as it's my home GP!"

DBR: Would you say your job is high stress?

NP: "It is sometimes for all of us. We have Andy Pringle who does our engines and suspension work and he for sure has higher stress than me. It's funny, on race day I get the pre-match nerves as if I'm about to go racing."

DBR: How many hours a week do you think you put in?

NP: "It's unbelievable! It varies but I couldn't put a figure on it!"

DBR: Can you tell us your best road trip story?

NP: "Me and Nick Moores were travelling late through the night and he always used to play this Pump Up The Jam CD. Anyway, I switched it for this Mr Blobby disc as he was driving. He didn't see the funny side and the next thing I saw it bouncing down the road in my wing mirror and we ended up having a massive argument about it!"

DBR: If you were still in your prime do you think you'd give Billy and Mike an arse kicking out on the track?

NP: "No problems at all! I remember when I was here in 2002 on the Honda I beat Billy...I remind him about that quite a lot."

DBR: Do you see yourself ever moving away from motocross as regards work?

NP: "I think one day I'll move onto something else but at this time this is what I want to do."



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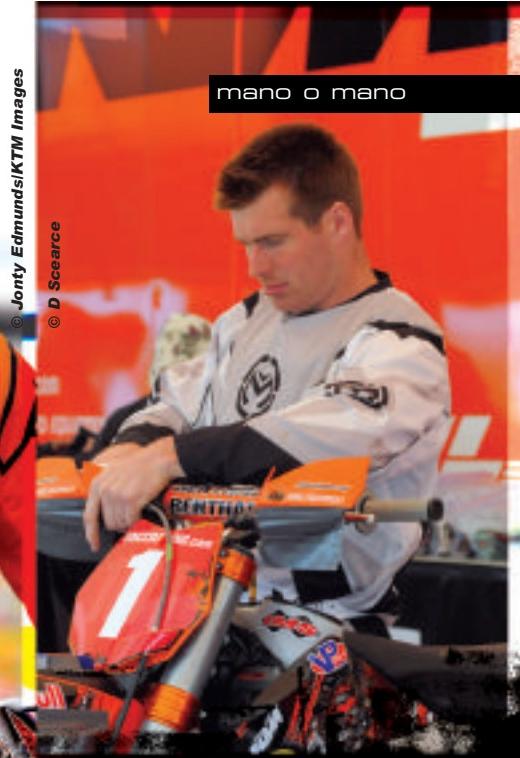
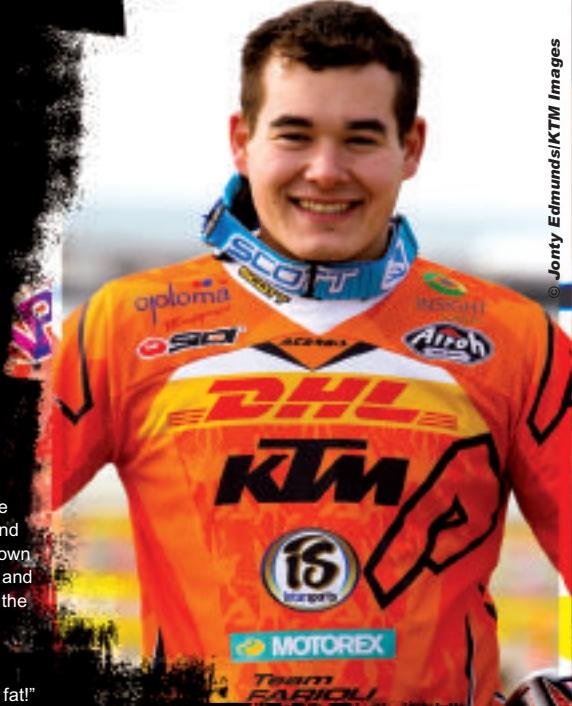
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For this month's instalment of fun and frolics we decided to delve into the mud, sweat, beers and dance-offs of the enduro world. We tracked down Britain's Farioli KTM WEC E1 contender Tom Sagar and jet-lagged GNCC champion David Knight for one of the most important interviews they've ever done!

DBR: Who would play you in a film of your life?
TS: "Probably Danny Devito – he's short, funny and fat!"
DK: "George Formby."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?
TS: "Ummm, probably three or four months ago. You know how it is when you've got someone to do it for you..."
DK: "Today, I ended up doing about 10 of them actually. My mechanic's getting my bike ready for the weekend so I've ended up doing all the sh*t jobs like changing tyres and cleaning filters!"

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?
TS: "I'll say yes, not off the top of my head but I've got a good idea what to do."
DK: "Yep, I do all of my own bikes, engines and everything. I heard a story in the last couple of weeks about someone flying to the UK from Austria just to change a clutch!"

DBR: Have you ever eaten anything you've killed?
TS: "No."
DK: "No."

DBR: How many bones have you broken?
TS: "Two, my wrist and my heel."
DK: "Not many really, just stupid little things like fingers and toes. The worst one was when I broke my wrist playing rugby at school."

DBR: How many and where are your tattoos?
TS: "I haven't got any at all."
DK: "[Laughing] Still in the Bazooka Joe wrapper! No, I don't have any."

DBR: It's the last lap, you're in second and right on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out in the last corner for the win?
TS: "Oohhh uummm aaahhhh ummm, yeah, I suppose I would."
DK: "Yes!"

DBR: What car do you drive?
TS: "It's a Ford Transit, not a car at all!"
DK: "It's a red LDV van that I paid £100 for."

DBR: If money was no object what car would you drive?
TS: "Easy, an Aston Martin DB9."
DK: "I'd have an Audi RS4."

DBR: What is your favourite food?
TS: "Probably what I'm having tonight, spaghetti carbonara."
DK: "Anything that's not American, although I am known for liking fish and chips and all sorts of junk food! I do enjoy a good Sunday roast though."

DBR: If you weren't a racer what would you be?
TS: "Probably welding, that's what I'm qualified to do."
DK: "Probably a mechanic."

SAGAR AND KNIGHTER

KTM FACTORY PAIRING GO HEAD-TO-HEAD...

Words by JP O'Connell

DBR: Which is your favourite enduro venue?
TS: "That was when the ISDE was held in New Zealand in '06."

DK: "Probably Erzberg because it's a good laidback weekend. You can really enjoy the whole weekend, it's not too serious and whatever happens, happens – there's also a beer tent!"

DBR: What's your ideal holiday?
TS: "Probably a beach holiday, just chillin' more than anything – with my girlfriend obviously!"
DK: "Probably a skiing holiday."

DBR: Have you ever been arrested and why?
TS: "Yeah, I've been arrested for fighting with one of my mates while out on our works p**s-up – I even got to have scrambled eggs in the morning!"
DK: "Nearly, for riding a bike without a helmet!"

DBR: What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?
TS: "[Laughs] God there's that many. Probably dancing at the Welsh two-day enduro, virtually naked, in a dance-off with Lee Edmondson – it's become a bit of a tradition now."
DK: "It was trying to dance in the Ghost Bar at the Palms Hotel after the race in Vegas last year. We were really drunk and it was a right good craic!"

DBR: Who's your favourite band?
TS: "Nothing in particular, although I do like a bit of dance music and drum and bass."
DK: "A good one! I haven't really got one in particular that I like, lots of different stuff really. I do like '80s rock and modern country and western – a bit sad really!"

DBR: How many sit-ups can you do?
TS: "I don't know...10?"
DK: "It depends what they're for!"

DBR: How fast can you row the 500 metres?
TS: "I don't use a rower so just make something up, something really fast!"
DK: "I'd not really used it until the beginning of this year when we started using it as a warm-up before

circuit training. We'd do 2000 metres which I think I was doing in 7.28."

DBR: How long would you have to be seeing someone before you cut the cheese in front of her?
TS: "The same night!"
DK: "Probably the first date, I usually wait for her to do it first then you've got the green light."

DBR: What's your favourite film?
TS: "Probably something like Kevin and Perry. I'm not into thrillers and all that sh*tte – it's got to be comedy."
DK: "No Limit starring George Formby. It's about the TT races and I've watched it about 10 million times!"

DBR: Where's the craziest place you've had to answer nature's call during your travels?
TS: "I'm not the sort of person who likes going sh*tting in the woods but if I need a p*ss I'll just go anywhere!"
DK: "In my trousers during the Weston Beach Race!"

DBR: Do you have any fears or phobias?
TS: "Snakes and spiders pretty much."
DK: "I don't like heights."

DBR: Can you cook and if so what's your best dish?
TS: "Oh yeah, bacon butties – I'm the daddy of bacon butties!"
DK: "Boiled eggs is probably my signature meal, five minutes in boiling water – mind you I do use a big pan!"

DBR: What's your most prized possession?
TS: "Probably my new dog."
DK: "My world championship winning bikes."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?
TS: "Whatever comes on the night! I'm safe with that as my missus was blonde when I met her but now she's brunette."
DK: "Brunette."

DBR: Favourite race you've been in?
TS: "Probably the Six Days in New Zealand in '06, I had a lot of fun and got a pretty reasonable result."
DK: "That would be the Giles Lalay Classic in 2001."

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DESERT DREAMS!

THE COUNTDOWN'S WELL AND TRULY UNDER WAY FOR THE IRISH ROUND OF THE MAXXIS BRITISH MX CHAMPIONSHIP...

Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Sutty

Happy days! British championship MX returns to these shores and it promises to be another cracking event hosted by the Cookstown club! Yep, round five of the Maxxis will roll into Desertmartin come Sunday 22nd June and that's correct, it's on a Sunday! Here's hoping that with the day's racing falling into line with the rest of the world's Sunday sporting activities the increased spectator interest will fill the club's coffers and secure this event for the future.

Main local focus will be on Martin Barr aboard his UTAG Yamaha in the MX2 class. Third in the points table at present, let's hope he is back to full fitness in time. It's no secret that Barty regards Desertmartin as his favourite circuit and it shows every time the Larne man rides at Porter's Pit. Winning at home is what life-long memories are made of and in 2007 Martin came within a whisker of doing just that. The absence of the Crock Star has left a void for the local fans – one that will need some filling! Is this the year

when Martin steps out of the shadows to claim the spotlight? Blarney will bet on two top three finishes for our boy with a win possible if he is 100 per cent fit.

His main challenge will come from another two Desertmartin fans – Shaun Simpson and Stephen Sword – who have both enjoyed success around the jump-filled track since they were tiddlers. GP success for Roger Magee's locally-based KTM UK team has boosted Shaun's confidence to previously unexplored levels. But while I'm sure that Roger is ecstatic about Shaun's results and just rewards for many years of hard work, he must also be pondering over the distinct possibility that the Simpson partnership may be drawing to a close as a berth under the KTM factory awning becomes more than just a dream.

Molson Kawasaki have stuck by Swordy throughout his well-documented injury saga, confirming their confidence in the Scot and proving that Molson Kawasaki are a loyal bunch. And Stevie's repaying this loyalty – leading the British and seventh in the world at the moment is not to be sneezed at and hopefully a sign of even better days to come for the likeable man from Lockerbie.

So, any other local interest? Graeme Irwin scored his first British championship points at Lyng and it's a steep learning curve for the youngster at this level. Graeme will feel at home around Desertmartin and if he can control himself he does have the speed to score good points aboard his Moto-One by TAS Suzuki. Other local interest will come in the form of Stuart Edmonds, Tommy Merton, GOMX rider Ross Brown and Ricky Baird with Gary Gibson, Drew Goudy and Edward Allingham all possible starters.

The Billy Mac class – formally known as MX1 – is already a battle for the lower podium places. Our local hopes for points are on the shoulders of Wayne Garrett – go Wayne!

In MXY2 Edward Allingham has picked up enough points to get one hand on the silverware. Only six points adrift of the top slot, young Edward is in good company and with only 19 points separating the top eight riders it's going to be a fiercely fought battle. Edward has stepped his game up another level this year, his work ethic is good and practising with Marty Barr is paying dividends.

The British GP was fantastic! A massive crowd were served up-close motocross in a modern setting which gives us something to aim for in

Ireland. I've said it before – this is the way forward for GPs and MX events that need punters in abundance to make them pay.

Martin Barr qualified through his heat at the British GP despite dropping his UTAG Yamaha in the early stages of the race. Keeping his motor alive, Martin quickly remounted and charged through to claim 12th position and the final transfer place to the GP. Unfortunately, the Irishman's luck ended while running 13th in the first moto when a small crash cost him both ground and rhythm. Moto two highlighted his shoulder injury and lack of race time at GP level so far this year.

August 30/31 is fast approaching, Fairyhouse is the venue and world championship motocross is the event! MCI president Sean Bissett and his crew will be feeling the strain as the dream of having a GP south of the border becomes a stark reality. I have a feeling that the Irish GP is going to be the jewel in the crown for GP MX this year.



Don't miss Graeme Irwin in Maxxis action at Desertmartin

Namur – with all its history and nostalgia – it is not but Fairyhouse offers more in terms of facilities that may catapult motocross in Ireland towards becoming a mainstream spectator sport.

Irish MX1 is starting to take shape with the defending champ, Moto-One by TAS racer Wayne Garrett, holding a slender lead over a very capable pack. Five rounds remain of the eight-round series and RS Freight Honda-mounted Richard Bird is levering himself into gear for the long haul race for the championship. Stuart Edmonds aboard his TM has been a formidable foe – he's got race-winning speed and fitness in abundance – but the occasional DNF is keeping Stuart off the top spot.

Teenager Gary Gibson is no slouch and has won races in both classes. The Ballygowan Honda rider holds fourth in the points table. Number two last season, fifth-placed Mike Sinton finds himself toughing it out with a dislocated shoulder. The GOMX/JRM Honda runner is considering a move to the MX2 class for the remainder of the season.

In the Irish MX2 class it's a Moto-One first and second with Graeme Irwin holding a 12-point advantage over Wayne Garrett. Third is Philip Loughlin who now has regained the level of fitness to match the speed that brought him so much success in his youth racing career. That man & Gibson is also making his presence felt in the MX2 class with Jason Garrett, flying the AJ Elite Bathroom/KTM banner, filling out the top five at this point.

See you all at the Desert!

Stevie
Sutty



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SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME?

THE IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF TWO VERY DIFFERENT 450cc ENDURO MACHINES IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER BUT WILL BMW'S AND HUSABERG'S RADICAL NEW OFFERINGS BE BETTER, WORSE OR SIMPLY JUST DIFFERENT?

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

Four-stroke motorcycle design and production has come a long way in recent years. Let's not forget that it wasn't all that long ago that thumper development was a secondary concern for most manufacturers as they raced to bring us lighter and faster two-strokes. Today things are very different.

We are all now used to four-strokes – even kids' four-strokes – being compact, lightweight, powerful and dynamic while two-strokes, generally, are heading backwards in terms of both development and availability. In some cases two-strokes' once annual place on factory production lines has vanished altogether.

But when it comes to 'new generation' four-strokes until now most of what we've seen from one manufacturer is pretty much the same as what we see from the others. Engines have become much, much more compact and lighter. Frames have become much, much more compact and lighter. In fact every manufacturer has tried to make their four-strokes smaller and lighter while giving us free-revving, instant two-stroke style power. The colours may be different but the design philosophy of all off-road four-stroke motorcycle manufacturers is decidedly similar.

While at first glance all of the currently available 450cc four-stroke enduro bikes appear different to one another – both visually and to a greater or lesser extent technically – on closer inspection we can see that what is being offered by one isn't all that different to what is being offered by all. Within the restraints of what every manufacturer knows works – one wheel at the front, another wheel at the rear, rider on top and engine in the middle – most bikes are very similar. Some have fuel injection, others aluminium rather than steel frames but the real differences are minimal.

In the coming months two manufacturers will give us very different four-strokes – both visually and technically. BMW - Europe's largest motorcycle producing company – and relative minnows Husaberg will each launch 450cc four-strokes that will 'break the mould' of what we are used to seeing and buying as far as single-cylinder off-road bikes are concerned.

Both 'new' bikes both have already been seen in competition in the World Enduro Championship. For BMW two years of very public testing and development in the WEC has resulted in the bike seeming anything but new. For Husaberg success first time out in the WEC has helped generate huge interest in the first truly new 'berg since the company's first offering over 10 years ago.

Despite both bikes having come from two very different design teams, despite having come from two different companies and despite many other differences they are joined by one simple fact – they both bring something new to the 450cc market.

What truly unites the two bikes is the fact that both have opted not to cradle their engines with frame rails, instead preferring to hang the engines from the chassis. Allowing both BMW and Husaberg to tilt forward each bike's cylinder, the subsequent lowering of the cylinderhead is what both manufacturers claim will offer increased manoeuvrability.

That is pretty much where the similarities

Geoff Walker puts the radical BMW G450X through its paces for next month's full test



end. Yes, both have fuel injection and, yes, both are electric start-only motors but that's about all the two bikes have in common. Although radically different to the bike it's replacing, Husaberg's new machine – with its gearbox underneath the crank rather than behind it – is certainly different to all yellow and blue bikes before it but in the greater scheme of things not all that different. The BMW however is.

BMW's G450X is one of the most technically innovative four-stroke off-road bikes since Yamaha unveiled their first YZF. Not wanting their first true off-road bike to be just like all the others they have designed, developed and built a bike that features a completely new engine and chassis combination.

Not only does the crankshaft rotate in the opposite direction to all other bikes, not only is the clutch placed directly on the end of the crank and not only does the swingarm spindle run

directly through the gearbox, the positioning of numerous key components are located in very different places than are found on all other bikes. The BMW is without question a very, very different solution to the same problems and challenges that face all manufacturers.

Will the new BMW and Husaberg prove to be better than what is currently available or will they just be bikes that are simply different to the ones we look at, own and ride? Will we see other manufacturers producing even more innovative motorcycles? Or will they remain as the two manufacturers that simply offer us 'alternative' 450cc enduro bikes?

Or are BMW-owned Husqvarna right to produce a 310cc bike in recognition of the fact that a growing number of the bike buying public are losing interest in the 450cc enduro machines that have simply become too powerful to enjoy?

It's going to be an interesting few months...

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WESTON WOE

Hey DBR. My name is Jodie Weeks, I'm 15 years old and love to ride off-road. I am one of very few girls that take part in this sport and love it! Being a great fan of the magazine I really enjoy reading the rants that the young people write to you about. After reading last month's rants I thought that I would give it a go.

For the past six years or so my family and myself have gone away to watch the Weston Beach Race which has got bigger and bigger every year. For the last two years I have taken part in the event and managed to do very well the first year and not so well the next! As 2007 was the 25th anniversary, all riders were told to collect a gift bag from one of the main tents. As this was the same as 2006 I was very excited to collect it as in 2006 all gift bags had a mug, t-shirt, booklet and voucher. In 2007 all we got was a t-shirt! HOW SAD!

After that there was a shout out to say that all youth riders should go to the Volkswagen stand to collect medals! I thought 'great, the same as 2006'. I got down the end of the beach front to collect my medal and the women said they had run out! Well...I wasn't amused! She explained and was very nice and took my details to send it in the post. Yet SIX MONTHS LATER nothing has arrived!

Jodie, Cornwall

We contacted RHL – the organisers of Weston – but we've not had a reply so we guess they're flat-out putting the finishing touches to the British GP at Mallory Park. Still, a new pair of Etnies has got to be better than a medal...

ATTENSHUN!

I'm a soldier serving in Afghanistan – from being at home on my bike and then being sent out here things have changed for the worse!

I've been out here for only three-and-a-half weeks and I'm already missing kicking up some dirt. My mates have been writing to let me know how they've been getting on 'living the dream' back home at the weekends – I can't wait to get home although, looking on the bright side, while I'm out here I have the chance to save for a new bike.

It's my birthday today and my mates have just brought me a brew and I've just managed to catch round two of the Maxxis in Kent. Billy MacKenzie did well again so that was good.

Just catching bits and pieces of the rounds can be annoying – I was wondering if you could send me a few magazines and a few posters to put up when I one day get home. Whatever you can manage will be much appreciated – I finish here around October so a long time to go.

Young Stuff, Afghanistan

Leave it with us mate...



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk. All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address. Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

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ONE-LAP WONDER

Firstly I'd like to say a great big thank you to my mum for marshalling in the cold, my dad for helping me with my bike and giving me advice and my bro and sis for putting up with the cold and sand. And secondly, after my first race of the season, I've discovered that I have no stamina and need to gain some fast due to being completely knackered after one lap.

Thomas, West Pinchbeck

If you spent less time writing to DBR and more time training young man...

LOS PLÁSTICOS POR FAVOR!

Hi, Andy is my name and wanting to ride motocross (while looking good) is the game. I live in the Murcia area of Spain but out in the campo (that's country to you and me). It's cool out here for a motocross rider because the Spanish local councils build tracks for all the lads to ride on for free.

Although the Spanish are great at providing this service, in the shops it's another story. Over here in Spain they work a little different and if your bike is more than three years old you will be lucky to find anything at all in stock when you need it. I have found myself a '99 CR500 and am itching to get it and show the Spanish locals how to clear a huge table top. Now if it breaks down and I gotta drop the engine and take her to the shop I will get her back in two weeks but trying to get plastics for it? Today I went around at least five shops to look for plastics and no-one knew a thing. The best I got was "maybe come back next month".

All I want are some black and white plastics and a seat cover so can you PLEASE, PLEASE help me find someone who can get me these and post them to Spain?

Andy B, Spain

If you race a five-toner – and you want it to be a stunner – then your best bet is to give MD Racing a bell on 0044 1935 429646...

PETE'S PEE'D OFF!

I am a huge fan of motocross and what really ticks me off is the f***ing council trying to shut down motocross practice tracks that are not harming anyone as they are in the middle of nowhere – eg Riverside MX. I don't understand them as these tracks are keeping kids off the street and letting people train for a race or get a feeling of their new bikes in a place that is not in a field or a park.

They also say that the bikes are too loud but we have just reduced the db to 94.

Peter, via email

PS Anyone that has the internet please sign the save Riverside MX petition at www.riverside-mx.com...

BLINGING!

Hey, I'm Jack from Wiltshire. I have been reading your magazine every month for the past year or so and I love it. I've recently taken up motocross as my mum and dad bought me a Honda CR85 for Christmas.

Lots of my friends also have bikes and we regularly ride together. We have little competitions to see who can make their bike look the best or enhance the performance. Do you have any cheap and easy tips to enhance the appearance and performance of my bike to show up to my friends?

Jack, Wiltshire

What you need Jack from Wiltshire is a copy of the Mini Motocross and Pit Bike Performance Handbook. It's packed full of tips for getting some extra vroom from your bike and, what's more, it's available from dirtbikerider.com for just £16.99. As for enhancing the appearance, well, keep your eyes peeled for a free one-litre bottle of Muc-Off which is winging its way to you right now...

SCOT SHOT

Dear DBR, what do you think of this shot I took of TWMA Kawasaki rider Sean MacDonald at the Scottish MX2 championship at the Duns track in the Scottish Borders? During the day Sean took three holeshots and ended up winning his three races so I reckon he deserves to get his pic in the mag.

Ross, via email

Good shot Ross and you're quite right, that sort of performance deserves a pic in DBR...

Sean MacDonald tears up the Duns track





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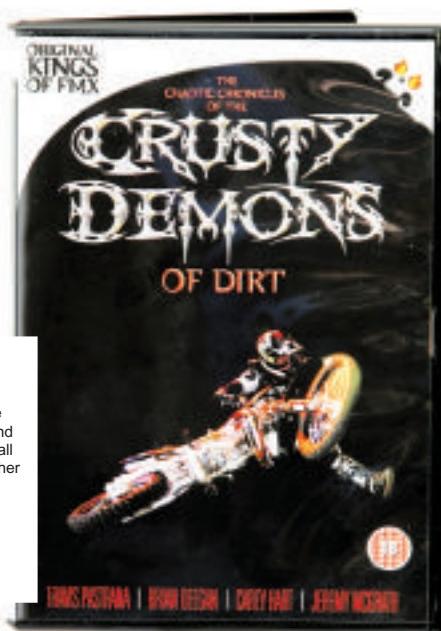
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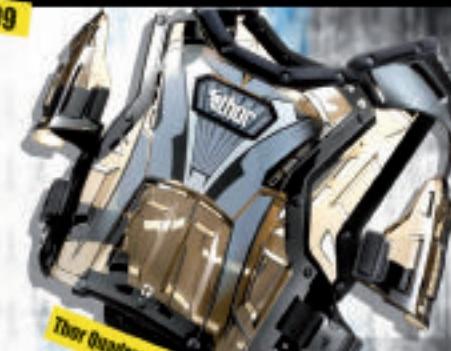
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BRAZIL NUT!

Belgian FMXer Nicholas de Witt has time to fire off a quick self-portrait midway through a double seat grab high above Belo Horizonte in Brazil. Given the exotic South American location we were holding out for a landing strip but apparently he touched down on a bog-standard ramp instead...

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NO EXCUSES!

BY CARL NUNN'S STANDARDS HE'S HAD A PRETTY SHOCKING START TO THE 2008 SEASON BUT RATHER THAN LOOKING FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO CARRY THE CAN THE DOUBLE BRITISH CHAMP IS TAKING FULL RESPONSIBILITY – AND AIMING TO PUT THINGS RIGHT...

Words and photos by Sutty

Two-time British MX2 champion Carl Nunn's had a pretty torrid time of things so far in 2008 and instead of battling for GP heat wins like compatriot young guns Tommy Searle and Shaun Simpson, the soon-to-be 29-year-old veteran of 13 GP campaigns has been battling to even score world championship points at some races.

Never a man to make excuses or even dream of a quick fix, Nunny knows that to turn his season around it's gonna be a case of building back his confidence bit by bit – and he's already got the job well in hand...

Carl's 2007 season didn't start at full pace either after a back injury picked up at the Hawkstone International made sure of a slow start to his year. Back up to speed by mid-season on the Bike-it Dixon Yamaha, the Suffolk-based racer scored British championship moto wins at Desertram and Whitby and also a string of season-best seventh place finishes in the GPs on his way to 14th in the overall standings.

But while the rider who placed one spot higher than Carl in the world championship – Xavier Boog – would go on to sign up for a factory Suzuki ride with the German Inotec team, Nunn's future Suzuki team would be a wee bit more low profile.

After losing their big bucks title sponsor late in 2007 the Chamberlain family's MVR-D (that's Motovision Racing Development) team regrouped, pooled their pennies and prepared to go grand prix racing again with much less budget and Nunny, Jason Dougan and Marcus Norlen onboard their home-tuned Suzukis. While the MVR-D effort may seem a little bit light on the bells and whistles front – especially when you consider where Nunn has come from in recent years – there's definitely nowt wrong with their race bikes as Dougan proved countless times in '07 and Carl found out when he tried it prior to signing for the now Suso-sponsored team.

>>





Above: Deep in thought in Portugal shortly before his best race of the year so far...



Carl's currently not the force to be reckoned with he once was in the British champs - but discount him at your peril...



GOLDENDAYS

CARL'S FONDEST RACING MEMORY!

"I'd say my best memory of racing or the one that jumps to mind first is the GP at Matchams Park in 2005. Everything went perfect for me that weekend and I had good times in all the practice sessions, holeshot and won the qualifier and then holeshot and won the first moto as well with Andrew McFarlane right on me the whole way. To win in front of the home crowd was great – when they get a home winner they love it – and that was a good feeling."

"The second race I don't think I was concentrating properly and I blew it. I remember I was feeling really jet lagged because the race was one week after the Japanese GP and I just wanted to go to bed after the first race because I was completely mentally shot. I remember the second moto clear as day, I holeshot again but I had too many things racing through my mind and I went into a long left-hander with my foot on the wrong part of the footrest and when I hit a bump my foot came off the peg and landed on the brake and I went down. I can't change what happened now and I know exactly what happened so it doesn't annoy me too much."





"When I first rode their bike I had to go to a lot of extremes to get the team to prove to me that it wasn't actually a 300 – that's how quick it felt," says Carl. "Overall it's a very good bike and it has a very strong motor and the team are always trying to develop it even further. The suspension is good too, my friend Trevor Buckley stepped up and offered to buy me some factory A-kit Showa suspension so we got that and now we've got it set-up properly too. It only arrived just before Valkenswaard and it was just way too soft there but I wasn't sure if it was that [the suspension] or if I was just riding terribly – that's how low my confidence was at that point."

But just six weeks before the Dutch GP Carl's confidence was high, or at least it seemed high when I spoke to him at the Liverpool supercross where Carl predicted an all-out war between himself and Stephen Sword for the British championship title. But while his prediction was half right – Swordy currently sits in first place at the halfway point of the series but with over twice as many points as Carl – the plan to dominate has gone down the drain. But why?

"Coming into this year I thought I had a pretty good chance, I trained hard throughout the winter and I rode a lot – I was riding up to four times a week which is a lot more than I've ever done before. I just wanted to be at one with the bike and didn't want to come into the year still learning how to ride it."

"The first few races didn't really go to plan and when that happens you're always a little bit behind everyone confidence wise. The strange thing is that I've always practised worse than I've raced but through the winter I seem to have practised a lot better than how I raced and when I started racing this year I was terrible and that's something that I'm still trying to figure out."

"The problem with the rear tyre at Donington was another dent to the confidence and that's the last thing I needed at that point. It was tough because it was something that was totally out of my hands and it was just a freak thing that will never happen again."

At least by starting the season with a no score meant things could only get better right? Hmmm kinda...

Round two of the British championship series saw Carl score a first moto fifth then get trapped underneath his bike for a good minute or more in moto two after stepping off the Suso Suzuki. "It was a really freaky crash. I was coming into a corner and I lost the front end and I went down just like I would in a normal wash out situation but then as I rolled onto my back the bike sort of landed across me with the front wheel by my head and I was just pinned with both my arms up by my head too. I was trying to wriggle free because the radiator was across my chest and starting to burn me. It was just a weird situation."

And how about round three of the British at Torrington, Carl, did anything exciting happen there to hold you back? "No, I just rode crap." It's been said before – Carl Nunn is not one to make excuses.

Two weeks later saw a dramatic turn round in fortune as after scorching to a solid 15th in race one at Agueda, Nunn scooped a dream start second time out and led the world's best 250F riders at the Grand Prix of Portugal. Leading by a clear bike length headed into turn one, Nunn only kept ahead of the pack for a further straight but rode smart and hung tough for the rest of the race to clock a seventh place finish in sweltering sunshine. Two weeks and one GP later in Seville and Nunn rode just as hard but finished back in 21st.

"It's hard to accept but the level at the GPs this year is so close between all the riders that if you start in 20th the best you can hope to do is improve by about three places. No-one seems to be coming from way back and getting on the podium."

"There are a few guys at the front who are obviously running a higher pace but after that there's about half-a-second between everybody else. It's so hard to make up that half second and there are a lot of people running the same lap times throughout the field – quite often I'll be running the same times as the guy in fifth but I'll finish way back."

>>





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"Things are getting better and I realise that this year has been more about progression so far..."

profile



NUNN IN A NUTSHELL!

CARL'S VIEWS ON...

THE GOLDENTYRE TUBELESS TYRE SYSTEM

"The idea of the tubeless tyres is very good and they do actually work well – the traction on the really hardpack tracks is phenomenal. On a shiny track they really work well too, the problem with them at the moment is that there are only one or two different tread patterns and compounds that you can use with the tubeless system. Another bonus is that there's a considerable weight saving to be had when compared to tyres with mousers in them which is something that appeals to the team."

LEATT BRACE ON OR OFF?

"It's only in the last few weeks that I've seen people taking their Leatt Braces off. Personally I don't have any problem with it and I don't notice it when I'm riding. The first time I used it I thought 'that's okay' and I raced in it last year and used it for practising all winter. There's nothing to say that if you crash it's saved you or it's not saved you – the same with helmets and knee braces. It gives me a lot more confidence to hang it out a bit which is something I'm not that comfortable with so for me they're a positive thing."

WATCHING HIMSELF ON THE TELLY...

"Sometimes I watch myself on telly and it can be embarrassing because I can see that I'm riding so badly but other times I can see things aren't quite so bad and that's okay."

HIS PLACE IN THE PITS...

"I feel like I'm a bit of an outsider this year and I know that when the top riders go to the line they're not thinking of my name but I don't mind that, I think it's cool. In a way it is a little bit like the year I spent with Kawasaki back in 2003 except now I'm more experienced and mentally able to cope with it. Back then if I was struggling it was devastating whereas now I know that I can only do my best. If I know that I have ridden my best I am happy – what will happen will happen and I can't change that."

RIDING FOR TEAM SUSO SUZUKI

"It's a really good team to ride for, everyone is very friendly and the family aspect works really well for them with the three brothers – Mark, Gareth and Justin – and the old man Ez working hard together. Everyone is out to help each other and there's no atmosphere under the awning."

"It's like in the first moto at Bulgaria. I was battling as hard as I would if I was battling for third place and the guys around me were battling just as hard but that was for 20th place – the guys that I'm battling with want that one point so bad. The best result I had this year – in Portugal – was the place where I had the best position on the start after qualifying well from my heat and I suppose that's what made all the difference.

"The thing is I need to finish higher in the pre-qualifying timed practice so I can get a better pick at the gate for my qualifier so I can then qualify better from that to get a better pick at the start line to then get a better start in the main races. It sounds simple but hanging it out for a fast lap is not my strong point and quite often my best time in the pre-qualifying session is around the same as my best few in the heat race.

"Things are getting better and I realise that this year has been a bit more about progression so far rather than me getting in there straight away but if we do keep progressing we'll eventually get where we want to be – it might be too late but we will get there."

It's obvious from speaking to Carl he's not satisfied with where he's at results wise but he is working in the right direction which disproves what you might read on internet message boards about him suffering from a lack of motivation. His sense of humour is in fine fettle too as he proves when I ask him about his levels of motivation.

"I've been racing for around 32 years now but it's not hard for me to stay motivated when it comes to racing – the hardest thing is to stay motivated during the week sometimes especially with there being nobody living near me to go training and riding with but I get the job done – because it's a part of me now. Racing has been in me for so long and I can never change that and I much prefer to race than ride, I mean here at the GPs all the practices get boring – I'd much rather get out there and race.

"I've been doing GPs for 12 or 13 years now and I've not missed all that many races. I've been doing it that long that travelling is becoming hard especially when I've got two kids who are jumping on my head at six o'clock in the morning – that can be especially harsh on a Monday when I've only got back from the races at two. Mia's four now and she has got to the point where she can pretty much accept that when I go away I'm going to come back but Harley's picked up where she left off and he's like 'I want daddy, I want daddy, I want him to come home' every time I'm gone for a few days.

"It's not a problem though and I'll definitely keep on racing for a few years yet for sure. I'm not sure in what class, this year there was no option because I wanted to ride MX2 but next year I'll consider riding MX1. I'm not 100 per cent sure if I'll do GPs again next year because as a professional racer it's just not beneficial – it actually costs me money to come here – but you do it because you want to be where you want to be in the world championships and that obviously helps getting a contract for the next year. It all depends on how this season goes but I've been thinking about not doing GPs next year and racing MX1 back home in the British championship and stuff like that."

But that's getting way too far ahead – we wanna know what's in store for the rest of this season! "I definitely feel like it's all coming together now and most importantly I still believe I can do it – I've just got to get out there and prove it!"

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COUNTDOWN!

IT'S THE BRITISH GP WE'RE ALL WAITING FOR BUT BEFORE MALLORY PARK THERE ARE RACES IN BULGARIA AND ITALY TO DEAL WITH...

Words by Sutty Photo by rayarcher.com

After scoring a GP win in Bulgaria and third overall in Italy, Red Bull KTM's Tommy Searle is the big points scorer in the MX2 championship this month and the British teenager claws back the points deficit from himself to the series' front man by 16 points in just four motos! Heading into Mallory Park just eight points back from current leader Rattray and five back on Cairoli it's not unfeasible that Searle could be wearing the red plate at round seven in France.

Tommy does the bulk of the damage in Bulgaria as his 2-1 results outscore Rattray – who finishes second overall – by nine and Cairoli by 20. The current champ actually wins moto one but crashes by himself in turn two of race two and is then mown down by Rattray and breaks a rib or three – depending on when it is you ask the Sicilian star. Crashing once more in the slippery Sevlievo mud, Tony restarts a lap down and hounds Searle but the display of unsporting behaviour so rarely seen in motocross doesn't faze Tommy one bit as he goes on to snatch the race lead from Shaun Simpson one lap and one straight from the chequered flag.

Simpson – who's having the race of his life leading from lap one – promptly turns tightly underneath Tommy to regain the lead but falls foul to Searle once more in exactly the same place as before just one lap later. Still stoked to finish second in the race and snatch third overall – with an 11-2 scorecard no less – Shaun's much less delighted when he's passed by the Englishman one week later in Mantova as Tommy's KTM is set to kill and not stun this week meaning the KTM UK rider must waste valuable time picking himself up.

Much like in Sevlievo, Searle's also a front-runner in Mantova as he battles with Nico Aubin for the win in moto one – a battle that the Frenchman wins after Tommy's held back by mid-race arm pump. While Cairoli makes up for his crash induced last-to-fourth charge in moto one by dominating moto two from the front, Tommy's edged out by Rattray for second which gives Tony C a crowd-pleasing overall win on the day ahead of series leader Rattray and Searle.

Scotsman Stephen Sword has mixed luck in Sevlievo and Mantova as he goes 4-DNF and 7-DNF proving the speed's there even if the luck's not. With both DNFs being out of his or the Molson team's control – a rogue handlebar clamp bolt shears in Bulgaria and yet another killer KTM strikes in Mantova – Stephen's left wondering what more he can do to crack the top five of the series standings.

After taking hold of the MX1 world championship lead in Agueda, Monster Yamaha's David Philippaerts has gone from strength to strength and actually looks more likely to go the full distance as the red plate holder week by week. Philippaerts' charge from last to fifth in moto one at Mantova is a ride worthy of any champion and now 28 points clear of defending MX1 champion Steve Ramon – who's currently second heading into Mallory Park – you'd be a fool to bet against the Italian 24-year-old going all the way.

Although Sébastien Pourcel wins back-to-back motos – one gifted to him in Sevlievo when Jon Barragan hits the Silver Action KTM's eject button on the last lap and one played for and got start-to-finish display of dominance in Mantova – he's still 61 points behind Philippaerts in the championship chase thanks to his early season inconsistency.

And speaking of inconsistent let's talk about Billy MacKenzie. The Scotsman is as much of an enigma as ever and although he's quite often the fastest man on the track, crashes and arm pump mean his best result is a fourth in the mud of moto two at Mantova and his worst is an "almost holeshot" to 15th arm pump-induced fade in Bulgaria. "I want to forget that it ever happened," says Billy. Forget what Billy?

Dutchman Marc De Rever takes a popular overall win in Mantova with a pair of third place finishes on the factory Martin Honda. Following a slow start to the season Marc's become a real protagonist of late with front running performances in Bulgaria and Mantova.

But what of the other Brits? MVR-D's Suso Suzuki speedsters Carl Nunn and Jason Dougan score good points at both rounds, a sickly Tom Church bars in Bulgaria but bounces back one week later to put in his best ride of the year – performance if not results wise – while James Noble solidly scores at both venues. Swift Suzuki's Brad Anderson notches up his first GP points of the year while team-mate Elliot Banks-Browne pulls off the pass of the weekend in Mantova to snatch the final qualifying position from the delightfully named Angelo Pellegrini – four points from moto two is his reward and go nicely with the three scored in Bulgaria. And finally the strangely tattooed Jake Nicholls makes a welcome return from injury but misses out on qualifying at both races.



Tommy Searle soars to victory in Bulgaria



Tommy Searle makes the MX2 podium but doesn't have an easy time of it

BELIEVE THE HYPE!

THE BRITISH GP DELIVERS EVERYTHING IT PROMISES – AND THEN SOME –
AS THE WORLD'S TOP MX PILOTS GO BAR-TO-BAR AT MALLORY PARK...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Sutty

With five rounds down and 10 to go the world's best motocross racers roll up for the British GP with Italian David Philippaerts 28 points clear of defending champ Steve Ramon at the top of the MX1 standings and his compatriot Antonio Cairoli just three points adrift of MX2 series leader Tyla Rattray.

After losing its traditional home at Foxhill in Y2K – and the following three-year absence from the world championship calendar – the British GP has tried and failed to find a permanent base at four different venues. For 2008 we're at location #5 – Leicestershire's Mallory Park – and in the months leading up to the race the hype's been steadily building.

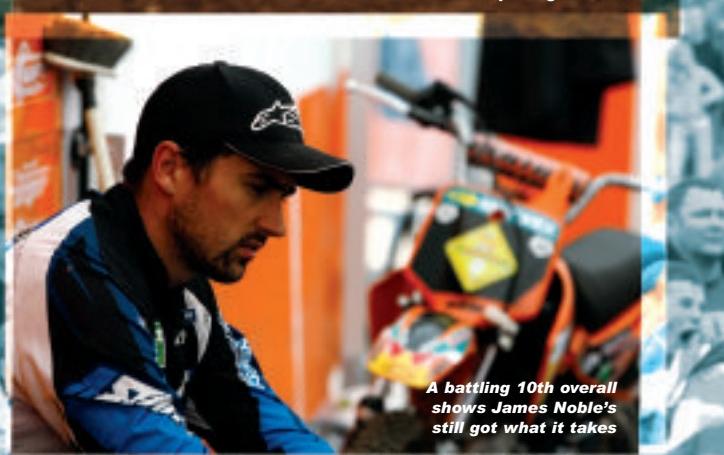
Despite our home GP's nomadic existence – and forgetting for one moment last year's strangely atmosphere-less event at Donington – the British Grand Prix has traditionally been one of the biggest and best of the season. So the '08 RHL Activities-promoted event has a lot to live up to – but can it deliver?

The answer is an emphatic, unequivocal big fat yes! The man-made track at first appears one-line but cuts up to become a super-technical circuit with plenty of passing possible – especially for those riders who can combine balls-out aggression with cunning line choice. And with passing comes excitement. And with excitement comes atmosphere. And when there are Brits at the front – and Brits making passes – then the excitement and atmosphere go off the scale.

GP OF GREAT BRITAIN



Defending champ Steve Ramon gets off to a flyer in the opening MX1 moto



A battling 10th overall shows James Noble's still got what it takes



First corner of the second MX2 race and Rui Goncalves (#10) tries a radical new line



Mechanical gremlins rob Carl Nunn of points in the first MX2 moto

Okay, so it's a South African who leads the opening lap of the first MX2 moto but Rattray's got Brits Shaun Simpson and Tommy Searle crawling all over him with the spectacular defending champ Cairoli throwing out huge whips in fourth. Simpson and Searle trade passes in the opening laps before the factory Red Bull KTM man finally makes a pass stick on the KTM UK rider but Simpson hangs tight in third and holds off a flying Cairoli until lap seven.

Molson Kawasaki's Stephen Sword rounds the first lap in ninth, pushes past Wyatt Avis for eighth and then bins it all the way back to 14th. Swordy's not been seen in home GP action since 2005 and any worries that two years of injuries may have extinguished the fire in his belly are swiftly laid to rest as he charges back through the pack. He doesn't look as super-smooth as the Swordy of old but this is a man hanging it out as he powers up to sixth at the flag.

And there's plenty of action at the front of the field as well. Rattray's seemingly home and dry but by three-quarter distance Cairoli's all over Searle's back wheel. Tommy ain't about to roll over and play dead but he leaves the door slightly ajar and his mistake gets him punted over a berm and back to third.

Tommy's rhythm's shot to hell but Cairoli's building momentum and hunts down Rattray, throwing his De Carli Yamaha sideways over the huge double jump as lap-after-lap he closes down the leader. Given another lap he'd probably get close enough but when the flag comes out it's Rattray by half-a-second. Searle's third, Simpson's fourth and Frenchman Anthony Boissiere snags fifth from Swordy.

Race two's almost a foregone conclusion as Cairoli takes the holeshot and controls proceedings from the front chased for the full race distance by Searle and Frenchman Steven Frossard.

But just because the first three doesn't change doesn't make the race boring. Rattray's mired mid-pack after a shocking start and with his red series leader's plate at risk he sets a scorching pace to carve his way through from a first lap 14th. Swordy's start isn't much better and when Rattray goes past him on lap four the Scot, who's been sat in 10th since the opening circuit, wakes up and latches onto his back wheel. The pair then leap-frog their way up the field and with the race in its final quarter they're in fourth and fifth having run down Simpson who's finally pushed back to seventh by Xavier Boog.

So at the flag it's Cairoli who takes the win by over five seconds ahead of Searle with Frossard snagging a season-best third from Rattray and Swordy just over a second behind in fifth followed by Boog and Simpson.

After a no-score in the opener Molson Kawasaki's French teenager Gautier Paulin is in the points in 12th, three places ahead of Carl Nunn who gets some consolation for a race one mechanical DNF. Neville Bradshaw also scores this time out with a 19th but a disappointed Martin Barr's out of the running for the second time in the day and Swift Suzuki's Elliot Banks-Browne ends his home GP with just two points from the opening moto after DNFing race two early on.

While we've got much more talent in depth in MX2, we've still got a fighting chance of a podium in MX1 in the lean, mean form of Monster CAS Honda's Billy MacKenzie.

And the reigning British champ – unbeaten so far this year on home soil – is fired up to keep his win-streak going in the opening moto, gating second behind Jonathan Barragan and following him for the first couple of laps. But as Billy picks up the pace in a bid to move to the front he crashes back to 10th, handing second to Steve Ramon with Max Nagl moving up to third ahead of Julien Bill and Tanel Leok.

Hooked up in a second corner clash that also takes out Sébastien Pourcel, three of MX1's biggest hitters – series leader Philippaerts, Ken De Dycker and Marc De Reuver – are way down the field in 12th, 15th and 22nd after the opening lap. De Reuver makes plenty of passes of his own to advance 13 places by the flag but it's Philippaerts and De Dycker who get the crowd hanging over the fences roaring them on.

By half-distance the Italian's all the way up to third with Big Ken just a couple of positions further back and when Ramon hits the front on lap 11 it only takes another tour before Philippaerts is up to second and De Dycker's in fourth.

>>

GREAT

With the two-lap board out it's Ramon fighting off Philippaerts with De Dycker right in the mix. The factory Yamaha rider then goes for a pass at the top of the circuit and crashes back to fifth leaving De Dycker second in a Suzuki one-two. On the final lap with just three corners left De Dycker jumps up the inside of his team-mate into a sharp left-hander, muscles his way to the inside for the following tight right and celebrates his win with a less-than-graceful nac-nac over the tabletop.

Barragan brings his Silver Action KTM home third from the Red Bull KTM of Nagl with Philippaerts fifth. First Brit across the line is MacKenzie in 10th, one place ahead of a detuned Josh Coppins. James Noble picks up points on the KTM UK machine in 13th and Mike Brown, Wayne Smith and Brad Anderson also score in 16th, 18th and 19th positions.

Race two sees De Reuver grab the holeshot chased by Barragan, Bill, Ramon, MacKenzie and Philippaerts but the wild Dutchman only enjoys four laps at the front before binning it. After inheriting the lead Barragan maintains a fast but controlled pace at the front and when Bill goes down a lap later the pressure's off, allowing him to take a comfortable five-second win from Pourcel to secure the overall.

Philippaerts maintains his championship lead with third ahead of Billy Mac, Leok and De Dycker while Ramon – for much of the race holding second – goes backwards after half-distance to finally cross the line seventh. Brown improves to ninth this time out and Noble fills the last berth in the top 10.

Coppins completes a disappointing day back in 12th but there are smiles in the STR Honda camp with Jordon Rose getting three points for 18th, one place ahead of Smith. Tom Church collects his second DNF of the day and Anderson crashes out in spectacular style.



Swordy shows his fighting spirit in both MX2 races...



...and fellow Scot Billy Mac hangs it out in MX1



RESULTS

MX1 >>

1	Jonathan Barragan	(E – Silver Action KTM)	20+25=45
2	Ken De Dycker	(B – Teka Suzuki)	25+15=40
3	David Philippaerts	(I – Monster Yamaha)	16+20=36
4	Steve Ramon	(B – Teka Suzuki)	22+14=36
5	Tanel Leok	(Est – Kawasaki RT)	15+16=31
6	Billy MacKenzie	(GB – Monster CAS Honda)	11+18=29
7	Sebastien Pourcel	(F – GPKR Kawasaki)	0+22=22
8	Marc De Reuver	(NL – Honda Martin)	12+10=22
9	Clement Desalle	(B – Teka Suzuki)	14+8=22
10	James Noble	(GB – KTM UK)	8+11=19
14	Mike Brown	(US – Monster CAS Honda)	5+12=17
20	Wayne Smith	(GB – Pioneer Emberson Yamaha)	3+2=5
21	Jordan Rose	(GB – STR Honda)	0+3=3
22	Brad Anderson	(GB – Swift Suzuki)	2+0=2

MX2 >>

1	Antonio Cairoli	(I – De Carli Yamaha)	22+25=47
2	Tyla Rattray	(SA – Red Bull KTM)	25+18=43
3	Tommy Searle	(GB – Red Bull KTM)	20+22=42
4	Shaun Simpson	(GB – KTM UK)	18+14=32
5	Stephen Sword	(GB – Molson Kawasaki)	15+16=31
6	Anthony Boissiere	(F – HDI KTM)	16+12=28
7	Steven Frossard	(F – CLS Kawasaki)	6+20=26
8	Manuel Monni	(I – 3C Yamaha)	14+8=22
9	Xavier Boog	(F – Inotee Suzuki)	5+15=20
10	Marvin Musquin	(F – NGS Honda)	8+11=19
18	Gautier Paulin	(F – Molson Kawasaki)	0+9=9
21	Carl Nunn	(GB – MVR-D Suzuki)	0+6=6
24	Neville Bradshaw	(SA – DB Racing Honda)	0+2=2
25	Elliot Banks-Browne	(GB – Swift Suzuki)	2+0=2

SERIES STANDINGS

MX1 >>

1 Philippaerts 223 points, 2 Ramon 195, 3 De Dycker 175, 4 Coppins 168, 5 MacKenzie 159, 6 Pourcel 151, 7 Barragan 150, 8 De Reuver 138, 9 Nagl 132, 10 Leok 129...12 Brown 87...18 Noble 48...20 Church 31...25 Campano 15...27 Anderson 10...31 Smith 5...33 Rose 3

MX2 >>

1 Cairoli 243 points, 2 Rattray 242, 3 Searle 233, 4 Aubin 158, 5 Simpson 156, 6 Goncalves 148, 7 Sword 144, 8 Monni 119, 9 Boog 119, 10 van Horebeek 109...12 Paulin 95...19 Nunn 54...26 Dougan 20, 27 Banks-Browne 17...35 Leuret 5...38 Bradshaw 2, 39 Norlen 2



A poor start in the second MX2 race costs Tyla Rattray his red series leader's plate



VETERANS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

OVERALL >>

1	Peter Iven	(B - Kawasaki)	25+25=50
2	Dave Thorpe	(GB - Honda)	22+22=44
3	Jan Blancquaert	(B - Kawasaki)	18+20=38
4	Toine van Dijk	(NL - Suzuki)	13+18=31
5	Terry House	(GB - Suzuki)	14+16=30
6	Thierry Godfroid	(B - Kawasaki)	15+15=30
7	Regis Simon	(F - Honda)	16+14=30
8	Chris Jacobs	(B - Suzuki)	9+13=22
9	Scott Eastwood	(GB - Honda)	12+10=22
10	Janis Mironovs	(Lat - KTM)	11+9=20
11	Greg Hanson	(GB - CCM)	20+0=20
20	Mark Silvester	(GB - Yamaha)	1+0=1

SERIES STANDINGS

1 Iven 82 points, 2 Thorpe 68, 3 van Dijk 67,
4 Godfroid 63, 5 Eastwood 57, 6 Blancquaert 56,
7 Jacobs 52, 8 Hanson 51, 9 Simon 41,
10 Mironovs 26, 11 House 30...28 Silvester 1



Greg Hanson's as spectacular as ever – maybe a little too spectacular, eh Greg?



Vets class – a combined age of 21,263

We're talking old-school



Hairy boyos!



Four-time world champ Dave Thorpe goes 2-2

PARTYPOOPER!

IVEN RAINS ON DT'S PARADE WITH VET DOUBLE

After his championship winning performance at last year's British GP, World Veteran Champion Dave Thorpe's looking for some more of the same in front of a baying home crowd but Belgian Peter Iven spoils the party...

Iven's much more 'race fit' than DT and it shows on the strength-sapping Mallory circuit as he takes two gate-to-flag wins and sets lap times that wouldn't disgrace an MX1 qualifier.

In the opener Thorpe moves up a place from third on the first lap behind Jan Blancquaert with fellow Brit Greg Hanson moving from fifth to fourth on the 450cc CCM. Iven's already cleared off and all the action concerns the battle from second through to fourth with Blancquaert clinging onto DT and Hanson clinging onto Blancquaert.

Lap-after-lap Hanson harasses the Belgian as Thorpe begins to pull away with Greg hurling the CCM off the huge double at the back of the track, easily getting enough air to clear what was until overnight alterations a monster triple.

With three laps to go Greg gets up into third and closes down DT dramatically but the three-time world 500cc champ holds his advantage to the flag to finish barely a second ahead of Hanson. Next best Brit is Terry House in seventh with Scott Eastwood – second overall in the championship standings going into Mallory – coming home ninth after two crashes slow his charge.

Race two looks to be a repeat of the opener with Iven getting away from Thorpe and Hanson charging through but a big landing rips the rear tyre off the CCM and sends Greg cartwheeling down the track. House moves into third and is looking good for a podium finish until a last lap mistake dumps him to fifth and allows Blancquaert through ahead of first round winner Toine van Dijk. Easty has another nightmare to cross the line 11th, one lap down and with his world title hopes in tatters.

Despite only mounting the second step of the podium, Thorpe's clearly having a ball in front of the home crowd – many of whom remember his halcyon days in the mid-to-late '80s.

"I thoroughly enjoyed it. I got beaten by the better man and I can't argue with that. The track, the atmosphere – I was just pleased to be here. I loved it, loved it. I did find the track difficult but I think most people in my race did."

"My heart was in my mouth a few times but I enjoyed it, I thoroughly enjoyed it, which is what it's all about. Peter was two seconds a lap quicker than me but there's one round to go and in motocross anything can happen, we all know that, so I'll keep plugging away."

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SHAUN SIMPSON

FLAT-OUT IN FIFTH

KTM UK's Shaun Simpson misses out on a podium finish but has a good weekend at the office. After coming through his qualifier in second behind Tommy Searle the Scot makes the most of two lightning starts to card 4-7 finishes and move up to fifth in the championship standings.

"Today the result was good with fourth overall. I missed out on a podium but it doesn't matter so much although it would've been nice."

"The track was good. You had to get a good start and I made two good starts. Obviously the first race was real good for the first 15 minutes when I was racing with Tommy and Tyla until I made a small mistake – Tommy went into one of the berms and a big clump of dirt came out which I hit and went down. But I kept it going all right and finished an easy enough fourth."

"The second one I got another good start, Frossard passed me so I was fourth again and I should have finished fourth to be honest but I couldn't find a rhythm, I was making mistakes and it just wasn't happening. So I'm a little bit disappointed but the results were good so I can't be too disappointed and too hard on myself."

"We're pretty near with our bike – it's not far away [from the Red Bull KTM's of Searle and Rattray]. You can see with my starts it's fast enough out of the gate. I think we just have to keep working on it a little more – maybe talk with the factory guys and see if they've got any tips for us – but I don't think we're a mile away."



Shaun Simpson's stellar GP season keeps rolling on

TOMMY SEARLE

DOWN BUT NOT OUT

Tommy Searle doesn't manage to repeat his British GP-winning performance from last August this time around and there's a few handbags chucked in for good measure.

The Red Bull KTM rider, criticised for a take-out move on Shaun Simpson at the Italian GP a fortnight before, gets a taste of his own medicine in the opening MX2 moto when he gets punted over a berm by Antonio Cairoli.

"I caught Tommy, I think I saw a hole to pass and the door was open but I thought he would close the door but I didn't take him out on purpose," reckons overall winner and new series leader Cairoli.

Needless to say, it's a move that's viewed differently in the Searle camp. "I was a bit tense and making a lot of mistakes but then Tony came past and we had a coming together and I ended up going down so this I was not happy about at all," explains Tommy at the post-event press conference with a diplomacy not shared by his manager Jamie Dobb immediately after the 'incident'.

"I liked the public here and I had a lot of fans here and they are crazy," grins Cairoli at the press conference. "I like that, everybody was close to the track and waving at us."

Some of the more partisan British crowd ain't too impressed with Tony's physical pass – there's obviously the occasional 'wave' that can be misinterpreted when you're hitting warp speed – but on the whole, Cairoli appears as popular as ever with Brit MX fans who can't get enough of the super-stylish Italian.

"Obviously I'm an English guy and I'm doing the best so far so I felt all the crowd was behind me," continues Tommy. "When I was riding round I could hear it and I was really happy to be riding in front of them at my home GP so I enjoyed today."

"The second moto I felt a lot better and I was enjoying the track. In the beginning I was riding really well and was behind Tony but at one point of the race he put in two good laps and I put in two not-so-good laps and that kind of gave him a gap I wasn't able to close."

"It's been a good weekend. I would have liked to win again but it didn't happen like that but every weekend I'm getting better and hopefully I can do it somewhere else."



Wayne Smith's gutsy rides get points both times out



WAYNE SMITH

HANGING TOUGH

Pioneer Emberton Yamaha's Wayne Smith only just makes the cut from MX1 timed practice in 28th and scores in both races – but it could have been so much better for the Cumbrian. We caught up with him at the end of the day...

"I'm pretty sore from the first race. I over-jumped the finish line because I knew there was someone hot on my heels and landed in the braking bumps and went clean over the bars. I jarred my wrist real bad and hurt my neck as well."

"It was stiff at the start of race two but I thought I'd be able to grit my teeth and knuckle down and was running a good pace for 15 minutes and then my neck locked solid. So I hung in there and was frustrated with 19th but it's points again and in the first I came strong at the end and got back through to 18th so overall I'm pretty happy with the weekend."



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BILLY MACKENZIE

BEST OF THE BRITS

Britain's best chance of a podium finish in MX1 lies with Monster CAS Honda rider Billy MacKenzie and after holding second for the first two laps of race one it looks game on – and then he drops it...

"The first race went terribly. I got a good start and was comfortable in second but I wasn't sure whether to push or not because I've had so many bad first races so I decided to chill, let the race come to me and see how it played out. I was riding so slow that I felt like I could catch him so I was like '*****s, I'm going to go for it' and I ended up on my arse like I normally do."

"When I got back up I was in the pack with a lot of boys racing, I got a bit of arm pump, tightened up and went down again. After that I got my act together and went faster the last three or four laps but it was all too late and I was in 10th and it was just rubbish."

"Before the second race I went and had a good look at the track and came out swinging. I had a good start but Nagl just drifted me all the way wide. He just didn't make the turn – I don't know if he was scared of someone in front of him but we could have been one and two. I managed to make a few passes and a few guys fell off as well and I had a close one with Ramon – he hit a line on a jump that curved and I hit the straight line and basically he passed right underneath me. It was madness."

"I just got into it after that – it got me excited – and I pushed all the way to the end which I was happy with. From second to fifth we were all within a second of each other it was such a close race and I'm happy I stayed strong to the end. I felt like I could have gone faster if I'd been in front of them, I just couldn't see the lines with them in front of me."

"The track's good. I think if we bring a little more soil in, some wood chip, improve on what we've got just now it will be mega."



GARETH HOCKEY

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

DBR: Well done Gareth – you've got to be delighted with the way things have gone this weekend?
GH: "I'm really happy. There are lots of issues from our side that we can iron out by knowing how Youthstream work but it's been good and the venue's worked okay."

DBR: In the past we've all seen British GPs spoiled by the behaviour of a handful of dickheads but there's been none of that this time...
GH: "The atmosphere has been fantastic – probably the best grand prix for atmosphere since Hawkstone I reckon. There's been no hassle – it's been the best crowd ever – really, really good."

DBR: What sort of attendance figures are you looking at?
GH: "We're working on a weekend attendance of nearly 43,000."

DBR: So financially it's been a success?
GH: "That we can't tell yet but I think at that sort of figure it's got to be."

DBR: Have we finally found a home for the British GP?
GH: "I think so and I think the British fans have found a venue which is more important."

DBR: In the run up to Mallory you were on internet MX forums actively seeking the fans' opinions and have really taken their views on board...
GH: "Yeah and it's going to be the same thing now because we know there were some things that weren't right at this meeting and we want the fans to tell us so we can make it better. That's how Weston worked – it took three years so it's the same thing. In three years time this will be very good."



It's close but no cigar for 15-year-old Mel Pocock

MEL POCOCK

STEPPING UP

Despite having a good crack at qualification, UTAG Yamaha's 15-year-old MX2 flier Mel Pocock misses the cut at his first British GP but he's all smiles when we track him down to the back of his camper...

DBR: How's your first British GP felt?
MP: "It's been mega with all the fans cheering me on the whole time. I know I didn't qualify but I tried my hardest and that's all I could do. I'm still only 15 so I've got a good few British GPs to come so I'll just keep pushing on."

DBR: How does today compare with your racing career so far?

MP: "Today was like a big step-up and although I'm like six seconds off the pace this is the world championship – this is as fast as it gets – so at least I know that's how much faster I need to go."

DBR: Have you learned a lot today?

MP: "Sure. I need to get the ruts into the table tops in a straight line – I need to practice that a lot because I always seem to get a bit squirrelly at the top."

DBR: What do you think of the track?

MP: "It was mega! It was pretty worn out in the Last Chance but it was mega this morning, really good."

DBR: The last time we saw you in DBR was in November 2006 when you tested a CRF150 for us. Now, barely a year-and-a-half later, you're competing in GPs – that's a big leap in a short amount of time...

MP: "A massive step! I trained this winter to do the BYMX and KWS and then Steve was so impressed with my riding we tried the U21s but there were a few things we didn't like so we tried the Maxxis, he was pleased with me there and now here we are at the worlds."



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Tommy Searle

Top British rider, MX2 Championship



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STEPHEN SWORD

PASSING MACHINE

Factory Molson Kawasaki pilot Stephen Sword, racing his first British GP in three years, seems to string more passes together than anyone else in either class as he posts a pair of solid come-from-behind results...

DBR: There was a lot of talk about the track being too one-lined for passing but that didn't seem to stop you in the opening moto.

SS: "I had a bad start in the first but I had a few places on the track that were working for me – up by the beer tent I had a good line. But I crashed when I was in seventh early on and went back to 14th and then I had it all to do but I got back to sixth which was a good ride for damage limitation and I was riding well."

DBR: You didn't gate too well in the second moto either...

SS: "For the second race I was thinking if I could get a good start I could get in the top four or top three and I had the pace for it but I just didn't get the start again. I missed the jump and then had to battle through."

DBR: When Rattray came past you hung on to him and got a great tow through.

SS: "I was having a good scrap with Rattray. We had good lap times but there just wasn't enough time in the race to get any further up. I caught Simpson and it was good points and I'm only 14 points off fourth in the championship now."

DBR: Because of your injuries we've not seen you in a British GP for a few years now. How did it feel to have a home crowd behind you?

SS: "Yeah, it was my first British GP since the Isle of Wight in '05. It was good with all the British fans going crazy – that was a great feeling. It would have been nice to get on the podium but, still, I scored good points."

DBR: How did you find the track?

SS: "The track was hard, it was demanding, really rutty and bumpy and stony and tight – a bit of everything – but I got my head around it. Saturday I wasn't enjoying it, I wasn't flowing, so today I attacked it more and it seemed to work better when I really attacked it and I had some good lines working for me."



NON-QUALIFIERS

BRITS WHO MISS THE CUT

Of the 33 British riders or members of British teams who attempt to qualify for Sunday's championship races 15 fail to make it through.

In MX1 Bryan MacKenzie, Ray Rowson, Jim Murro, Jamie Lewis, Jamie Law, Luke Mellows and Richie Lawson miss out while the MX2 non-qualifiers number Jake Nicholls, Lewis Gregory, Alex Snow, Marcus Norlen, Michael Phillips, Ashley Greedy, Mel Pocock and Joe Dark.

Out of all the Brit non-qualifiers it's probably Relentless Suzuki's Lewis Gregory who comes closest to making the cut. At two-thirds distance in his qualifying race Lewis is a clear 12th – the final

quali spot – but he's eaten up by the chasing pack in the final four laps.

"I had a good opportunity in the heats but once I got into 12th there wasn't anybody to chase close in front of me – I only had pressure from behind and I didn't ride very well. I just made a couple of mistakes and a few people got me really quick when I messed up in a couple of corners. I tried to get Nunny back and I hit his back wheel and went down and that was that."

"The LCQ was just a nightmare – I was going as hard as I could go but I just couldn't seem to get that extra bit. I'm gutted."

CARL NUNN

COMING FROM BEHIND

The weekend doesn't get off to the best of starts for Suso MVR-D Suzuki's Carl Nunn when he stalls on the line in his qualifier.

After the opening lap he's moved up seven places and he keeps climbing up the leaderboard for the full race distance but by the flag he misses out on an automatic entry into the point-paying races by less than half-a-second.

Nunny makes no mistake in the LCQ to transfer to Sunday's championship motos but by this point his work's only just beginning...

"In the first race from where I was on the gate I had a decent enough start, then I made a mistake on the first lap and lost a few places. But I started coming through and just got onto the bunch in front of me and something happened with the bike and it stopped.

"In the second race I got a decent drop, changed gear too early and bogged down. The guys in the first turn collided and all fell in front of me which seems to be what happens when you're on the outside. I clawed my way back through the pack up to 13th and then with three laps to go I caught my foot on a rut and it tore my leg off the bike.

"I've been suffering since Bulgaria with my ankle anyway and I had about a minute of pain that's so intense all your strength goes out of your leg and your ankle so I had a job shifting gears and also I didn't want to put my foot down. I had to let the two guys behind me go through and I could get back on them again but by then I had a lap-and-a-half to get back by them.

"I thought the track was pretty good to be honest. I like the way it got really rough and it was technical and that's the kind of track I like. I'd like to see more tracks not necessarily the same as this but the same sort of thing with tighter sections because the tracks are getting so open now. I thought it was cool."



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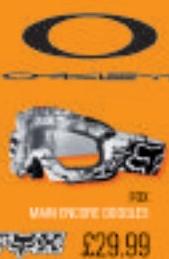
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'TEEM SPIRIT!'

THE MX1 RIDERS' REFUSAL TO GO TO THE GATE FOR THE SECOND RACE IN SPAIN ISN'T THE ONLY TIME THE STARS HAVE SHOWN SOLIDARITY IN THE FACE OF EARLY SPRING SLOP...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

When rain chooses to pour down on a motocross meeting the consequences can be pretty drastic and for riders, fans, photographers and officials the only fun to be had is to slide and slither through slime, slosh and standing water.

It's noticeable, though, that the regular front runners still shine through. Strange that! In conditions invariably described as 'a lottery' Steve Ramon, David Philippaerts, Ken De Dycker and Josh Coppins – the top four in the championship table – filled the first four places in race one of the Spanish MX1 GP. This perfectly mirrored a similar epic of 25 years ago proving that the technique and willpower demanded of potential champions isn't necessarily obliterated by awful conditions...

The riders finally – and unanimously – called a halt to race two in storm-battered Bellpuig. Damp shades of the wettest European spring on record that turned the early weeks of the 1983 international motocross season intermittently into a titanic test of strength, skill and determination. Andre Malherbe, Georges Jobe and Eric Geboers were winning their respective GP classes with Jobe dominating a hideously rain-lashed French 250 round at Chateau du Loire despite, incredibly, a broken clutch lever in race one. Back home Neil Hudson and Dave Thorpe, the latter newly hired by Honda, shared the spoils as the contest for British Open honours hotted up on a horrible skating rink at Elsworth Moto Park.

A welcome victory for Yamaha's Hakan Carlqvist in the Austrian 500cc

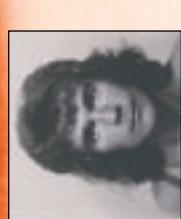
GP rekindled a three-way battle of the giants with Malherbe and first-round winner Graham Noyce. Both those opening 500 GPs in Switzerland and Sittendorf enjoyed a brief respite from the monsoons but come May Day luckless Laveno Mombello in northern Italy saw its first ever 250 GP cancelled after Sunday morning protests by the main factory protagonists led by Jobe and defending champ Danny LaPorte.

Like Laveno Mombello, Northeim in northern Germany had never before hosted a grand prix. Both clubs might have hoped they never would again! For on May 8, a week after Laveno's misfortune, the rain struck again at the exposed, grassy hillside circuit 60 miles south of Hannover where the RTC Northeim's 16th annual international was, for the first time, the 'Grosser Preis von Deutschland'.

Actually, conditions were tolerable until about 30 minutes before the start of race one for which 18-year-old rookie Kurt Nicoll had joyously put his Kawasaki on pole – a staggering three seconds faster than Malherbe's Honda – beneath dark, brooding Sunday morning skies. Then the black clouds simply exploded!

Malherbe, Carlqvist and Noyce, together with FIM rider representative Jaak van Velthoven, wanted a distant uphill section removed. So while Nicoll paced impatiently round his Kawasaki in the parc ferme his 39 opponents hiked through the puzzled crowd to inspect the offending incline.

>>



JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Beta and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. Now he's a commentator, rode it to a local 'scramble' college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. He never did get a proper job...

REFUGENTS REBELS INCLUDED NEIL HUDSON (LEFT), IN A Swift Suzuki, BOB JONATHAN WRIGHT (77) & TONY CARROLL'S CAPTAIN CHADING DI CARLI



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In fact, some disenchanted fans lobbed a few desultory sods of mud at this slow-moving riders' army as they lugubriously surveyed the scene before being ordered back to the start over the tannoy by the FIM jury president! Then, as Nicoll finally rode imperiously out to the start line, second man Malherbe threw off his helmet and, along with van Velthoven, insisted the course be cut!

The 15,000 spectators remained astonishingly patient as this awkward operation went ahead. So too did Nicoll, sitting alone and primed on the line for fully 10 minutes before retreating reluctantly to the parc fermé.

Ice-cool Andre vitally holeshot through a virtual lake and won a hellish race with an almost disdainful display of focused finesse, his rivals already desperately grabbing tear-offs amid the saturated, adverse-cambered first chicane. A slime-smothered Carlqvist snarled his way to second, 30 seconds behind the winner, with Finnish sand master Tapani Pikkarainen third and Noyce, after an early fall, yelling his way through to fourth. Lower placings were utterly confused as Nicoll, among many others, struggled to conquer the short, sharp, cruelly steep and cambered climbs.

At half-distance Kurt's dad Dave skated past me after pulling his son clear of the mire once more. "What order have you got down, Jake?" he shouted, looking at my sodden notebook. I showed him. Dave laughed. "Oh, you've got no idea either then," he mocked unkindly!

Although several team lap charts had Husqvarna's Willie Simpson inside the top 10, Kurt was eventually awarded a steaming eighth place behind Thorpe, Hudson and Andre Vromans (Suzuki) and ahead of American Gary Semics (Honda) and final points-scorer, the affable Norwegian champ Jan Kristofferson (Yamaha), with Willie back in 13th. Team Green's other kid, Cheshireman Howard Lucas, grabbed 11th ahead of van Velthoven and Italian Franco Picco. The 22 gallant finishers racked up anywhere from 17 laps – the first five home – to last man Ole Svendson's 12!

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ANDRE MALHERBE WON +
KEPT CLEAN IN
SECOND RACE SUNSHINE



KURT NOYCE PICS
UP HIS KAWASAKI,
AGAIN, IN RACE ONE



As sunshine broke ironically across a scene reminiscent of trench warfare, most of the riders seemed to have enjoyed the whole mud-soaked performance and Noyce quickly quelled a minor rebellion in the ranks. "Come on, we'll only get covered in the same sh*t again," urged the cocky Hampshireman. "Let's get on with the second one!"

And Graham did exactly that! As Malherbe, looking boyishly unfamiliar minus faceguard, waded to another serene victory – this time by almost 40 seconds – his HRC team-mate fought tenaciously from seventh to second, squeezing past Suzuki duo Bruno and Andre Vromans and Dave Thorpe. 'Carla' also bulldozed his messy way through to sixth. His Yamaha team-mate Jukka Sintonen survived for seventh ahead of KTM duo van Velthoven and fabled Austrian drinker Georg Reiter. Semics, a future training guru of Jeremy McGrath, secured the final point.

Vromans had ousted Thorpe from fourth late on, snatching fourth overall from the big Berkshireman and maintaining his fourth place in the title table. Ahead of the slightly-built Belgian his Suzuki team-mate – Johnny Aubert's uncle Jean-Jacques Bruno – benefited from a superb start-to-finish third after sinking without trace in race one!

Victims of the increasingly cloying mire included Pikkainen, Hudson, Nicoll, Simpson, Lucas and first turn fallers Jonathan Wright (Kawasaki) and little Harry Everts, who had endured 13 tortured laps on – and off! – the third factory Suzuki to finish 19th in race one!

Sumptuous evening sunshine bathed the podium as The Big Three presented a frosty, uncommunicative front. After the shared camaraderie of the protest, a chilly distance separated Malherbe from wingmen Noyce and Carlqvist who also happened to lay first, second and third in the world championship.

This awesome contest would run and run, whatever the weather!

Bolts finishes an awesome
third overall – good work
northern bloke!



IRON AWE!

WITH A STARTING LIST OF 1500 COMPETITORS AND JUST 38 FINISHERS THE ERZBERG RODEO IS THE TOUGHEST – AND JUST PLAIN CRAZIEST – HARE SCRAMBLE ON THE PLANET...

Words and photos by ANTOINETTE ROSS

Nothing quite prepares you for the sight of the Iron Giant as you wind your way through Austria's national park. Standing at over 5000ft it towers above the little town of Eisenerz in the Erzbach Valley, dominating the skyline and glowing red alongside its snow-capped brothers.

The mountain, terraced over the years from iron ore mining reputedly dating back to the 12th Century, has become the destination of choice for extreme off-road enthusiasts all over the world from as far away as Mexico, New Zealand and Canada who come together once a year for the mayhem that is the Erzberg Rodeo. For the 14th running of the event – billed by the organisers as '1500 riders, 31 nations...one mountain' – I arm myself with a fistful of Euros, satnav and camera and set out on a 2000-mile roadtrip to spend three days with some of the most insane and friendly people you could hope to meet.

If you wish to enter the event it's a paltry 40 Euros and for that you'll get two attempts at the Iron Road Prologue racing against genuine dirt bike heroes including Cyril Despres, Taddy Blazusiak, Giovanni Sala and Juha Salminen and if you crack the top 500 an entry into the Main Event – Sunday's Erzberg Rodeo. Classes cover virtually the full off-road spectrum from mainstream enduro bikes to street bikes and scooters.

The campsite's 500 metres up the side of the mountain and is a hedonistic mix of beer, bikes, barbeques, burnouts, beer, more bikes, beer, loud music and partying – and that's just the competitors. High above the trade stands and press offices in the main pit area, it's a world full of camaraderie, shared experiences, support and friendship.

Friday morning dawns and the first day of the Iron Road Prologue begins. Everyone from factory stars to the nutter dressed as a mouse on a moped all take to the course which makes use of the mountain service roads with a few man-made chicanes thrown in for good measure. The idea is simply to go as flat-out as you dare. For many of the 1500 riders the prologue's little more than a fast trail ride but braking bumps and a few random rocks result in some fairly spectacular crashes. With fallen competitors brushed off and placed back on their bikes by supportive spectators there's plenty of help at hand and only a few walking wounded are sporting fresh plastercasts that evening.

First day honours go to Frenchman Antoine Letellier aboard his factory Aprilia RXV550 who sets a blistering pace to come home in just over nine minutes. And just 13 seconds behind, American Tim Farr records an astonishing second-placed finish aboard his 450 KTM quad. The top 10 surprisingly isn't completely dominated by orange bikes and includes a BMW, two Aprilias, a Beta and a Husaberg. Mark Jackson takes the honours for the highest placed Brit in 47th with Paul Bolton just one place behind.

>>

Local hero Georg Durriger takes on the Iron Giant

Red Bull



Friday also sees the start of qualifying for the RodeoX Endurocross. The course consists of many variants of log pile, a rock garden, watersplash, quarry tyres and a rather large dumper truck trailer all set in an arena with fabulous spectator accessibility and viewing. KTM's Blazusiak sets the early pace but his time's eventually beaten by Paul Bolton by 0.15 of a second, taking a jubilant Bolts to the top of Friday's qualifying session.

When the day's serious business is done and dusted the 1500 competitors – plus just about anyone else with a bike – take to the streets of Eisenerz for the traditional parade. The streets and pavements are packed with spectators cheering, videoing and photographing the riders who pull out all the stops with skids and wheelies and general stupidity. No-one bats an eyelid – not even the local police. The organisers have brought the event to the people of Eisenerz as a thank you for the use of their mountain and only a few flowerbeds get hurt in the process!

Even off-road legends like Cyril Despres get it wrong

While I'm snapping away a rider pulls up alongside me. "Do you have any fears...if not hop on baby!" So I clamber aboard engineer Andreas Haydl and radiographer Hubert Joham's shared Enduro-ised Honda Transalp entry and take to the streets of Eisenerz as one of the gang. Thanks guys, it's an experience that'll stay with me forever!

Day two sees the second round of the prologue and with the best time from the two days taking the competitors through to Sunday's final 500 the ante is well and truly upped. Once again Letellier powers his Aprilia to the top spot, bettering his previous day's time by seven seconds to grab the coveted #1 plate for Sunday's race. Farr's second again but this time the KTM trio of Salminen, Despres and Blazusiak all comfortably place inside the top 10 and Paul Bolton records a superb 30th to earn himself a position of 41 for the Main Event.

Saturday night features the final of the RodeoX but without Paul Bolton who withdraws to save himself and his bike for Sunday's hare scramble. Blazusiak's a fairly convincing winner and with the majority of Poland turning up in support an incredibly popular one at that. Despres spends most of his time parting company from his KTM over the dumper truck obstacle but is overjoyed as he finally conquers his nemesis in the final laps. With Cyril out of the running second place honours go to BMW's Andreas Lettenbichler and third to American rider Geoff Aaron aboard his 2wd Christini KTM 300.

After the arenas close much partying follows along with the prize-giving of the prologue and endurocross in the beer tent and the stage is set for Sunday's main extravaganza – the Erzberg Rodeo Red Bull Hare Scramble.



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KTM

*With climbs like this
failure is not an option*

Before everything kicks off I come across a group of UK lads who have all made it through to the final 500 – Wayne Mundell, the legendary Rob ‘Rabbit’ Wrayford, Simon Comer, Robert Pollard and Gary McCoy. After getting them to pose for a team photo I wander off to rub shoulders with some of the greatest names and talent in off-road riding as they get ready to tackle the 16 famous Erzberg sections with names such as The Burping Stones, Ghost Town, Dynamite, Carl’s Diner and the Devil’s Forest.

At precisely midday the first row of 50 riders blast off in a cloud of dust heading to the first climb with Lettenbichler taking the lead which he holds until a third of the way through when Blazusiak finally takes control. And even without David Knight racing there’s a Brit on the podium with Bolts wrestling his way to a fantastic third, 19 seconds ahead of Dakar superstar Despres. Overjoyed with his result, Paul stays in the arena to applaud every rider to cross the line in the four hours – a true sportsman indeed!

Multiple WEC champion and previous winner Juha Salminen finishes ninth with another UK entrant Mark Jackson taking 10th, Martin Craven finishing 17th and Rabbit 27th – good work Brits!

All the finishers have to complete a lap of the endurocross circuit and judging by some of their exhausted faces entering the arena the log piles and stacked tyres aren’t very high on a list of fun things to do. At 4pm the blasting horn booms to signify the end of the four hours and with only 38 finishers making it to the final checkpoint you get a good insight into how hard an event this truly is.

The organisers were predicting it would be two hours before the first rider would finish so Taddy’s time of one hour and 20 minutes – a full 15 minutes ahead of second-placed Lettenbichler on his 450cc BMW 450 – is pretty darn impressive. And almost as darn impressive is the performance put in by Nicola Paganon who becomes the first rider to get a twin cylinder bike across the line which he does in 12th place aboard his Aprilia RXV450.

The masterminds behind this amazing weekend – race director Karl Katouch and press director Martin Kettner – must be applauded for what can only be described as the greatest hare scramble in the world. Not only do they entice the world’s best to enter, they also manage to convince the average off-road rider that this race is just as much about them as it is about the likes of Blazusiak, Despres and Salminen.



Geoff Aaron flies to third in the RodeoX



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SPRING THING

LAST MONTH HE SHOWED YOU HOW TO SET YOUR SAG, NOW IT'S TIME FOR GEOFF'S BACK BOINGER CHANGING MASTERCLASS...

Photos by still-mx.co.uk

Rear spring changing is a pretty simple process and with the knowledge of setting the sag and the fact that you may need to fit a harder or softer spring for your weight (see last month's Walker's World of Wang) you can get the part ordered and get on with setting the bike up for you personally.

I am using a CRF150 for the walk-through and it follows the same kind of pattern for most bikes. The KTM is obviously easier as the shock unbolts and slips out of the side of the rear end with only the pipe being removed on a four-stroke and the top and bottom shock bolts removed on the two-stroke).

1: The seat must come off first.
2: To make life easy for yourself you should whip the pipe off at either the front or rear. With the CRF and the DEP pipe fitted I find it best to remove the front pipe.

3: Loosen the subframe bolts and the carb boot holding clip. Pop the rubber off the rear of the carb and take the subframe off the bike.
4: Remove the top and bottom shock bolts and take the shock out. Clean the shock and remove the top spacers.

5: With the shock in the vice tap the locking ring loose.
6: Now loosen the spring off by turning it anti-clockwise with your hand until the spring is completely loose.

7: The retaining clips can now be removed which will allow the spring to be removed.

8: Clean all the fitting parts and place the new spring onto the shock making sure it is fitted the correct way up.

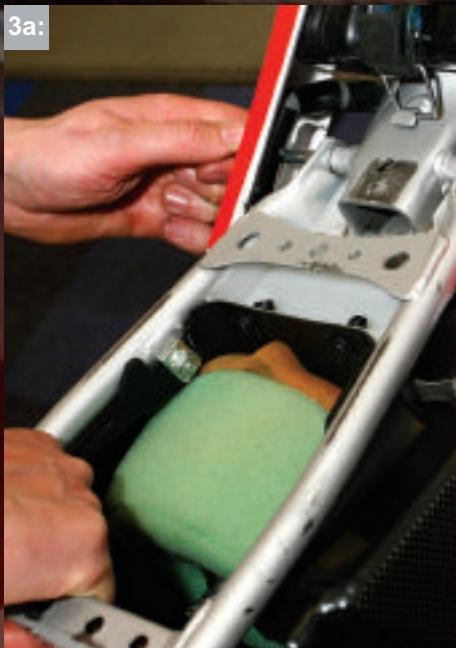
9: Tighten the spring down a few turns so the spring has some tension on it.

10: Grease and fit the spacers back onto the shock and refit to the bike.

11: A tip for getting the rubber boot back onto the carb easily is to spray a small amount of brake cleaner onto the rubber which will make it slip onto the carb easily. Fit the subframe, pipe and seat before setting the sag on your rear end, making sure you tap the locking ring down tight when the sag is set.

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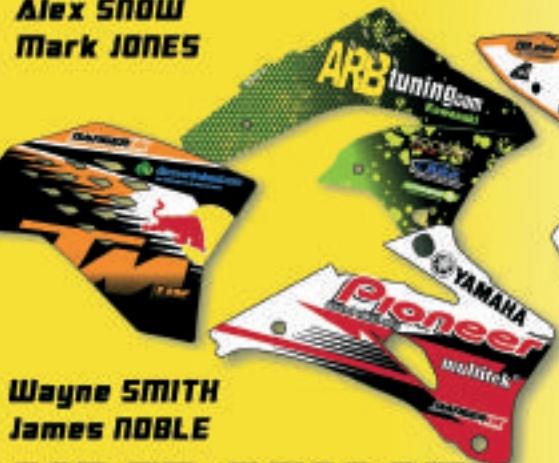


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WHOEVER SAID THAT YOU NEED BALLS TO BE A MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPION COULDN'T BE MORE WRONG AS THE LEADING LADIES OF OUR SPORT PROVE WEEK-IN AND WEEK-OUT...

Words and photos by **Sutty**

The inaugural running of the FIM Women's World Motocross Championship has everything anyone could possibly want from a race series – drama, speed, close racing, an abundance of genuine title contenders and more glamour than the Cannes film festival.

Although purely based in Europe for 2008 with rounds in Bulgaria, Italy, France, Germany and the Netherlands, the championship is in fact a real cosmopolitan affair with entrants from 15 countries spread across the three key motocross continents – North America, Europe and Australasia.

After three years classed as a world cup the women's series finally got upgraded to full championship status for this year. And that extra

amount of recognition from the FIM and Youthstream has helped elevate women's motocross to a higher level with more riders than ever scoring supported rides with high-profile teams.

Probably the highest profile of all the European riders is Grand Prix Kawasaki Racing's Livia Lancelot who starts her second full season with the MX2 world championship winning Franco-Belgian outfit. The foxy 20-year-old led last year's world cup before wrecking her knee ligaments mid-season which meant she was unable to successfully hold on to the red plate at the last of the three-round series in Lierop. Still on the mend from off-season reconstructive knee surgery, Livia is far from full strength for the

opening round in Bulgaria but still in much better shape than her closest two rivals Katherine Prumm and Steffi Laier.

Prumm not only has a change of machinery to contend with after moving from Molson Kawasaki to Van Beers Yamaha but also days before the season opener in Sevlievo, the two-time world cup champ ruptured her right ACL in a training accident. "I was doing a practice moto when I lost traction on the ramp of a jump," explains Katherine. "I came down at strange angle and my right leg was off the peg and took most of the impact. I felt something go pop and I knew pretty much right away what had happened."

KTM Germany's Laier has ligament issues of

*With two rounds gone
Livia Lancelot's holding
a slim lead in the new
series for women*



her own after damaging her right shoulder meaning she misses round one although fellow frauleins 18-year-old Larissa Papenmeier (Inotec Suzuki) and Maria Franke (Elf Pfiel Kawasaki) ensure that a German presence is firmly felt.

Although only one American rider had flirted with the world cup before – five-time WMA Pro National champion Jessica Patterson got smoked by the Euros at Uddevalla in 2006 and never came back – the increased status of the series convinced American Honda's 17-year-old sensation Ashley Fiolek to cross the Atlantic for the first time.

Despite her tender years, super-cute Ashley is one of the American action sports industry's hottest properties and the profoundly deaf

teenager is a Red Bull and Oakley-sponsored athlete and has even appeared in the legendary music magazine Rolling Stone! Riding a Honda CRF250 for the Belgian-based LS Motorsport team and wearing stars and stripes Alpinestars kit, Ashley was sure to make her presence felt in the championship one way or another.

The geographical location of round one at Sevlievo in Bulgaria – where even the shortest route is more than 1500 miles from Calais and that's if you fancy driving through Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia – keeps British entrants down to a bare minimum and there's only a trio of our girls present. Malaga-based English teacher Sophia Paull is the only true privateer of the bunch travelling around 2300 miles in her

camper van with boyfriend Dustin, her trusty CRF250 and an exercise bike while Steve Dixon's UTAG Yamaha effort supports Tessa Hayward and 15-year-old rookie Megan Lewis who are both able to rock star their way to the races with easyJet.

The Bulgarian government-funded Sevlievo circuit is considered to be one of the best motocross tracks in the world with its high speed uphills, descents and many varied and technical jumps making for some very entertaining racing action. And race one's an absolute epic as Lancelot and Papenmeier trade places at the front of the pack for the full 20-minute plus two lap moto while Fiolek and Franke fight tooth and nail over third. A mere 11 seconds cover >>



THE MANAGERESS!

WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

BOSS WOMAN STEFY BAU

Stefy is a living legend in the world of women's motocross and so far is the only female racer to have ever tried to qualify for both an AMA Pro National and an MX2 grand prix.

Now retired from the sport after suffering a career-ending crash that destroyed her right ankle, bruised a bunch of internal organs and dislocated her left elbow – ‘it was a bad crash I can tell you,’ says Stef – the 31-year-old has now been appointed as the manager of the FIM Women's World Championship. Stef's role is to help increase global awareness of the women's championship and obviously to keep things running smooth so we hooked up with her to see what's what...

DBR: You were known as a tough competitor in your time. Are you disappointed not to be able to race in the inaugural Women's World Championship yourself?

SB: “Of course I am! Sometimes I think I was born too early. Anyway, I'm happy with what I've done in my career as a racer and I believe I contributed to make what women's motocross is today. Yes, sometimes I wish I can be in there with them rubbing elbows but I feel really lucky that I have this job with Youthstream and I can still push for the girls' and women's motocross in general.”

DBR: How did the Women's World Championship come about?

SB: “Well, it's because of the FIM and Youthstream that we have this championship right now. They are the ones that decided that the women riders deserve a world championship and they put a lot of effort in to make it happen. It's a fairly new thing and it's really exciting so the media dig it as well. The women riders love to have this opportunity and the male racers are happy to have more women around in the paddock. I think overall this championship makes the sport more complete.”

DBR: What's your vision for the future of the series?

SB: “I would love to see a closing of the gap between women and men in this sport. I'm not talking only about the speed but also about the salary and recognition. I think that with an overall effort it can be done. Youthstream believes in it, the FIM believe in it and I believe in it so I think we can get it done. It's already happened in tennis and motocross is way more exciting...”

DBR: What do you think of the current crop of contenders – Prumm, Lancelot, Laier, Papenmeier and Fiolek – and what do you think they bring to the sport?

SB: “First of all I think it's really good that the contenders are from all over the world. It's important because it shows that women's motocross is active and alive all over the place. I personally know each rider you mentioned and I think they are all really talented women. They are putting a lot of effort into making motocross racing a career and they have each their own personality and that is very good for the sport. I feel I'm a sort of mentor for them and I'm happy to see that we can work all together to improve the women's side of the sport.”

FRENCH FLYER

LIVIA LANCELOT

Age: 20

Residence: Itteville, France or Ans, Belgium

Bike: GPKR Kawasaki

How many years have you been racing?
“16 years.”

What inspired you to race? “My dad was an amateur racer and so I started riding at a really young age.”

What are the highlights of your career so far?
“All my podiums in the world cup and my win in Bulgaria was very special for me.”

What are your biggest strengths as a rider?
“I'm good at jumping and I never give up.”

What are your biggest weaknesses as a rider?
“Probably sand tracks and I definitely stress too much before the races.”

What changes would you like to see made in women's motocross? “I'd like to see races at more of the rounds and more space for girls on the top teams.”

When you're not racing or training what do you do to enjoy yourself? “I stay at home with my family or spend time with my friends.”

What five words describe you the best?
“Generous, courageous, sporting, dedicated and I don't know how you'd say it but bad charactered.”

© Sarah Gutierrez





First corner action from Bulgaria with Prumm (#1) and Fiolek (#67) fighting for the lead



the first four at the finish in what was one of the most entertaining world championship races of the year so far with the win going to pint-sized Papenmeier – at around 5ft 1ins the biggest thing about Larissa is her smile – while Fiolek beats back Franke for the final podium position.

Papenmeier has much less to grin about after race two as the Inotec Suzuki rider's carted off to the ambulance with a cracked ankle cap and ligament damage after clashing with Fiolek at the end of lap one! As heavy rain soaks the Sevlievo track there is simply no stopping Lancelot though and she dominates from the front with only Franke able to stay remotely close. Prumm toughs it out for third to keep her championship aspirations alive while Fiolek remounts from her crash with Papenmeier to edge out Swede Elin Mann for fourth.

British girls Paull and Lewis score two points apiece thanks to a 19th place moto finish each while non-qualifier Hayward watches on from the sidelines.

Steffi Laier's return to the series for round

two in Mantova throws as big a spanner into the works as the overnight rain that turns the circuit's conditions from perfect to sloppy in the space of a few hours. While Lancelot's quickest all day long in Saturday's dry conditions – by more than three seconds in the qualification session – it's Laier who leaves Italy as a double race winner.

In a similar style to what went down in Sevlievo, moto one at Mantova's worth the weekend's admission price alone as Fiolek, Lancelot, Papenmeier, Laier, Prumm and Franke have a bruising six-way bra-to-bra battle that sees the lead change hands at least five times and the following five positions many more. Just as it looks like Lancelot might make a break for it she stalls the motor and slips back to sixth allowing Prumm and Papenmeier to fill the lower podium positions behind Laier.

The German KTM rider completely dominates race two from start to finish while Lancelot gifts the runner-up spot to Prumm with four laps to go after stalling the motor again. But despite losing

SERIES STANDINGS

WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

AFTER TWO OF FIVE ROUNDS

1	Livia Lancelot	(F – Kawasaki)	82 points
2	Katherine Prumm	(NZ – Yamaha)	80
3	Ashley Fiolek	(US – Honda)	72
4	Maria Franke	(D – Kawasaki)	65
5	Larissa Papenmeier	(D – Suzuki)	61
6	Elin Mann	(SWE – KTM)	55
7	Ellen De Winter	(B – KTM)	53
8	Marianne Veenstra	(NL – Suzuki)	51
9	Steffi Laier	(D – KTM)	50
10	Nicky van Wordragen	(NL – KTM)	47
24	Sophia Paull	(GB – Honda)	2
25	Megan Lewis	(GB – Yamaha)	2

Larissa Papenmeier gets her race face on!



points on the day the GPKR rider retains the championship lead. And despite the difficulties surrounding her injury, Prumm is only two points behind the series leader after two rounds of balls-out* racing.

But with three rounds still left to race, including Lierop where absolutely anything could happen, the title could potentially go to any one of six racers. There's courageous Kiwi Prumm, French sensation Lancelot, American teen queen Fiolek or any one of three German Frauleins – Laier, Papenmeier and Franke. If the racing so far is any indication of what's in store you'd be a fool to miss it.

* The term 'balls out' actually refers to ball governor valves on steam engines and has nothing to do with hairy boys. As steam pressure increases, the ball governor spins faster and centrifugal force causes the balls on the valve to extend outward. On Mississippi steamboats the engine room man would inform the captain 'balls out' when the steam engine had reached its maximum capacity so in essence the term 'balls out' simply means as fast as possible.

BATTLING BRIT #1

SOPHIA PAULL

Age: 20

Residence: Malaga, Spain

Bike: Honda CRF250

How many years have you been racing? "I've been racing since I was five so that makes it 15."

What inspired you to race? "My dad used to race and he was pretty good at a local level. I just remember being brought up around the sport and I started riding when I was three."

What are the highlights of your career so far? "Scoring GP points every year I've raced in them."

What are your biggest strengths as a rider? "I'm strong and I have a lot of experience."

What are your biggest weaknesses as a rider? "Being short doesn't help and I don't ride enough because I have to work full time as an English teacher."

What changes would you like to see made in women's motocross? "I'd like to see more financial help for us to get to the races and I really think the federations – including the ACU – should help."

When you're not racing or training what do you do to enjoy yourself? "Not a lot really, I'm either working or focussed on motocross."

What five words describe you best? "Determined, emotional, clever, ballsy and bubbly."



SUPER SWEDE!

ELIN MANN

Age: 21

Residence: Uddevalla, Sweden

Bike: West Coast Racing KTM250SX-F

How many years have you been racing? "10 years – since I was 11."

What inspired you to race? "My dad was always interested in the sport but never had the chance to do it when he was young. He bought my little brother a bike when he was four and I was five and I wanted to ride it all the time so I stole it from my brother until my dad bought me a bike of my own. I love motocross so much – I like the racing, the speed and the jumps."

What are the highlights of your career so far? "Standing on the podium in my hometown of Uddevalla in 2006 was the best feeling ever. I live just three kilometres from the track and so everyone – all my friends and family – was there. I'd like to repeat that feeling for sure."

What changes would you like to see made in women's motocross? "I want the sport to be more professional with more girls in big teams."

When you're not racing or training what do you do to enjoy yourself? "I like to hang out with my friends, travel and I also like shopping."

What five words describe you best?

"I'm tough, happy, kind, angry (sometimes) and late [Elin's first moto of the day was minutes away when we grabbed her]!"

DUTCH DESTROYER

MARIANNE VEENSTRA

Age: 17

Residence: Harkema

Bike: Winter Racing Suzuki RM-Z250

How many years have you been racing? "12 years."

What inspired you to race? "My dad was always a racer, he raced grasstrack for a lot of years and was very good but when I was old enough to start riding we started to race motocross instead."

What are the highlights of your career so far? "In 2006 I was sixth in the Women's World Cup and in 2007 I was seventh which was really good. In '07 my best round was in Lierop and I just missed out on the podium finishing in fourth – this year I really hope I can finish on the podium there. I've also been to race in America and in Japan which was a lot of fun."

What are your biggest strengths as a rider? "I never give up. Even if I crash or have a bad start I keep on going and going to try and get the best position I can."

What are your biggest weaknesses as a rider? "I'm not aggressive enough and I'm too gentle with the other riders – if there's a slower rider in front of me I won't make a block pass or anything like that."

What changes would you like to see made in women's motocross? "I'm quite happy with the way things are with the world championship but I would like more races. I've been racing the series for a few years now and I've seen an improvement each year."

When you're not racing or training what do you do to enjoy yourself? "When I'm not at school I spend a lot of time on my computer or I'm training."

What five words describe you best? "That's a hard one... I'd say I'm gentle, sporty, adventurous, spontaneous and dedicated!"

BATTLING BRIT #2

MEGAN LEWIS

Age: 15

Residence: Portsmouth

Bike: UTAG Yamaha YZ-F250

How many years have you been racing? "Four years."

What inspired you to race? "My dad used to ride – I'm much better than he ever was – and one day he took me to watch the girl's nationals and after that I wanted a bike."

What are the highlights of your career so far? "I was fifth overall at Pontefract last year. I had to have special permission to ride from the ACU as I was only 14 years old at the time."

What are your biggest strengths as a rider? "I like jumping."

What are your biggest weaknesses as a rider? "I'm not fast enough in the corners."

What changes would you like to see made in women's motocross? "Last year the starts of the races had women doing the 15 and five-second boards but they've changed it now to the digital timer. I think they should have men doing it for us."

When you're not racing or training what do you do to enjoy yourself? "I like swimming, shopping, running and going to the gym."

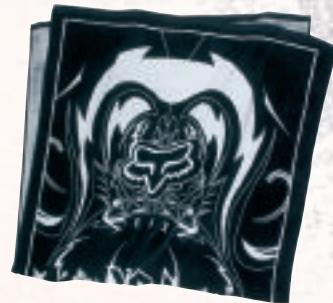
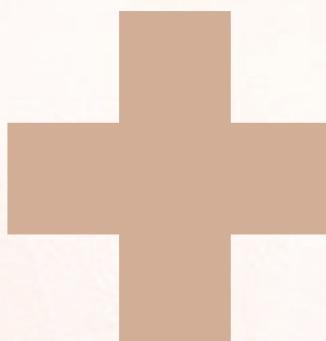
What five words describe you best? "Funny, friendly, competitive, bubbly and cheeky."





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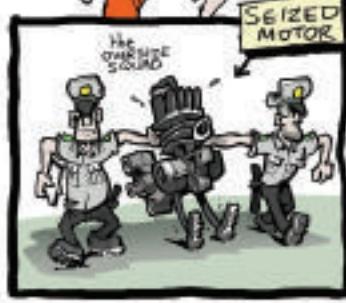
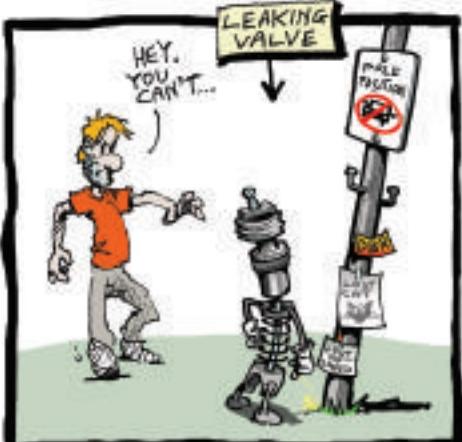
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ASSAULT & RATTRAY!

AFTER A DISAPPOINTING 2007 SEASON, PIT PUNDITS WERE READY TO WRITE TYLA RATTRAY OFF – BUT THE 22-YEAR-OLD SOUTH AFRICAN HAS COME OUT SWINGING IN 2008...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

Many people had written off Tyla Rattray after he couldn't run with Cairoli and Pourcel last year but the 22-year-old from Durban has rebounded with a bang, winning the first three motos of the '08 GP season to re-establish himself as a true world contender.

"It's a lot of things which have come together. I'm back healthy, I've got a new trainer this year and KTM have really stepped it up with the bike. Perhaps the main thing is that I'm back healthy now – that's important in motocross. I had major knee surgery at the end of last year. The knee just wasn't strong enough from when I hurt it before in '05 and that's why it happened again. I twisted it in Sweden and again at Loket. There was clearly something not right."

"I went to see the doctor and he said it would just collapse again if I rode before I got it fixed. Now I'm feeling good, it was the right thing to do. And getting it fixed early meant I could get back to SA where I could start to prepare for this year, cycling and working with Russell."

Russell is Russell White, a South African whose talents are so universally recognised that top names like Sébastien Tortelli and Ezra Lusk each flew him to the States to control their training at the height of their careers in the late '90s.

>>



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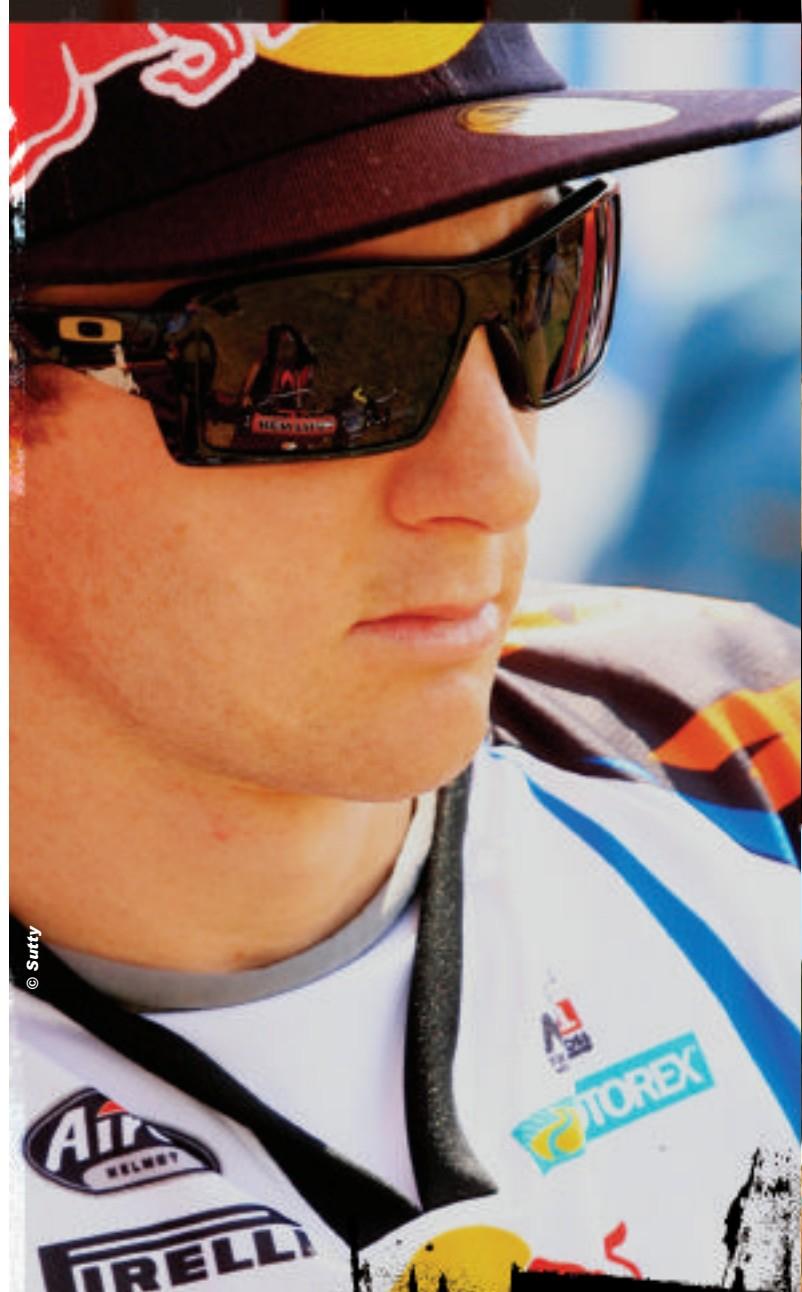
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CLOSE KNIT

THE KTM CLAN

"Stefan is way more relaxed than he was last year. I think he felt under a lot of pressure to prove himself last year. Going from being a rider, a world champion, to being a team manager is quite a step. He's been working with us a lot, he comes training with us and he can still keep the speed for maybe 20 minutes usually. Some tracks he can only do three laps before he's complaining about arm pump though."

"But he is still fast. I think if he had ridden in Spain he would still have won, he was and still is so good in those conditions. He just has such a natural talent on the bike and that is something which helped his racing career continue for so long."

"I get along with both Tommy and Rui real good and what happens on the track stays on the track. We KTM riders need to respect each other on the track and of course if I'm faster and Tommy can see that, he's not going to do anything silly, he's going to let me past and try to learn, see the different lines and that. We have respect for each other on the track, we don't ride dirty with each other or T-bone each other. Up until now we have maintained a friendly rivalry and I think we can do it to the end of the season. We are all professional athletes and know what to do."

"Rui is also based in Belgium and we do a lot of training together during the week. I think he is now the same speed as me in training, some tracks even a little bit faster and I expect him to be picking it up and racing with us some time this summer. It takes time to make that final step but he is going to be really strong before the season's over. Tommy bases himself in England so mostly we only see each other at the races but I expected him to be up there from round one. He was on it at the Nations last year and I knew he wanted to fight for the title because he goes to America next year."

"The '08 bike is really good now. I think we've got the fastest 250 four-stroke on the track, the guys from WP have been working hard, trying to give us the best setting possible for every track and the handling is also much better."

"The whole KTM team has now really come together now – a real family – and that was something which has been missing the last couple of years. There is the same feeling like there was back in 2003/2004 when I was racing with Ben. We've got a good vibe going in the team. If we notice something wrong with the bike we don't try to hide it from one another."

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With stepfather
Wayne Lumgair



Tyla lost the red plate in
Portugal but grabbed it back
in Bulgaria



Sury

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"Russell will be coming over to Europe just after Italy until the GP in SA and he may be coming back again afterwards too if we feel it is necessary. Although we have been working at a distance since I came back for the start of the season he keeps a really close eye on me.

"I even wear my heart rate monitor when I'm out training and I send him the readings every week. He knows what all the results mean and how to monitor me – that I must not do too little but also not too much – and he gives me an updated programme each week. It's the sort of thing which your own body will tell you in the end but by then it's too late.

"Russell can call on all of his experience over many years to know how much the body can take and what it needs. That's his job and that's what I pay him for, to look after my body for the whole season, keeping me fit all year. Many riders peak and then fall away at the end of the season but the plan is to keep me on top for all season.

"I think this has become very important for sportsmen nowadays. We are pushing the body so hard from start to finish of two 40-minute motos. I now feel comfortable and confident. I haven't had this for the last three years.

"And Russell is one of the best. He trains a lot of top triathletes in SA and last week they all won their age groups so you see he knows what he's doing. I'm happy I've got him."

So, without letting too many secrets out of the bag, what programme is Tyla on now?

"It's still all the running, the cycling but Russell also believes in a lot of swimming. It's everything you would do in a triathlon but it's the mix each week and the variations, like we do a lot of mountain biking and in the pool we do all sorts of different things. It's not just swimming up and down for an hour, we do things like swimming a length without taking breath, at least we see how far we can go.

"These are the things he's got me on and they're something I've never known until now. That's why we started early with my base training in SA so he could teach me it all. Obviously you slow down your base training during the season and go with more intense stuff. That's what he's got me on now.

"Two years I got injured. I won the first races in '05 and '06 too but then I got hurt. Obviously you have to stay healthy the whole season, that's the key to any championship. I think being really fit helps with injuries. When you're fit, it makes your concentration a lot better, especially when you're racing. You start making those mistakes when you start to get tired and that's what costs you. When the body is 100 per cent the mind is too, you can see those small mistakes and can avoid them.

"Then last year I tried to do it on my own. I thought I knew what to do but I didn't. Stefan helped me a little bit but basically I was completely on my own and it just didn't work. I was concerned that I could burn myself out, I came into the season too slow and I just never caught it back up."

Tyla's nickname in the orange awning for the last few years has been 'Bull' and it was something he was proud of at the time. "I'm maturer in myself now. It's a stage we all go through in our lives when you're still a baby in many ways and suddenly you grow up. You see it in Tommy too – he's already a lot more mature than he was last year.

"This year I feel fit and I have what it takes to push to the end and >>

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OPTIONS OPEN

HEADED STATESIDE?

Tyla only signed a single-year contract last summer even though KTM offered him a multi-year deal.

"I wanted to keep my options open. I didn't want security. I wanted to prove what I am worth. My goal is to be in America next year. If I can get into a factory team I'm definitely going to be gone."

"It's not for the money. I need enough to live on but that's not the bottom line. I'm not going to America to earn big money and live like a rock star, I want to go there to race and to settle down."

"The thing about America is that I can live a normal life. Everyone speaks English and there are good tracks to train on. I have a lot of friends there like Langston and Ben so I think it will be a lot of fun. I can live at Ben's place – we still get along really good – and Ben will already be on the 450 in SX and the outdoors next year so we won't be racing against each other. And if I go to America I want to race SX the first year already, that's my plan. I feel I can adapt to SX pretty easy, our tracks in SA are pretty much SX-orientated anyway."

"If I can get a good deal then I go to America. I'll listen to everyone, talk to all the teams and see who comes up with the best package."



Sandwiched between title rivals Cairoli and Searle in Bulgaria

BRACE BULL...

WHY TYLA'S LEATT-LESS

Tyla hasn't worn the Leatt neck brace since Mantova at the start of the year.

"I'm over it, it doesn't really bother me whether I wear it or not but I think it is better not to have it at hot races like in Portugal because you are getting better airflow. And switching back and forth is not the best option."

"I also had a few problems with Red Bull, like the bull looked too fat on the brace. They need somebody to make the stickers specially for the Leatt so it's the right bull. The bull needs to look fit and my bull was a little bit overweight. I think he drank a few too many cans!"

"For sure it is safety but it also covers the Red Bull on the shirt and some of the other logos. I don't want my points penalised because you can't see the FIM logo. I just feel comfortable without it now."



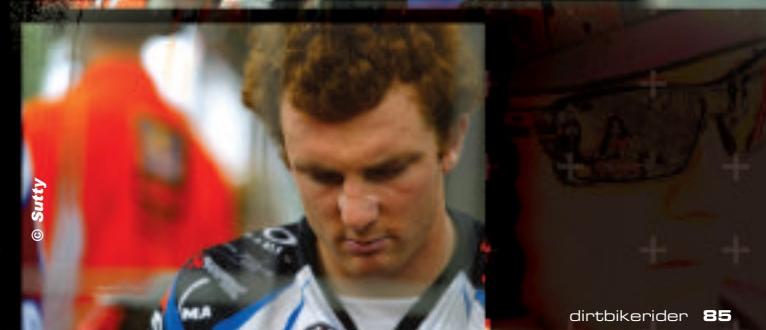
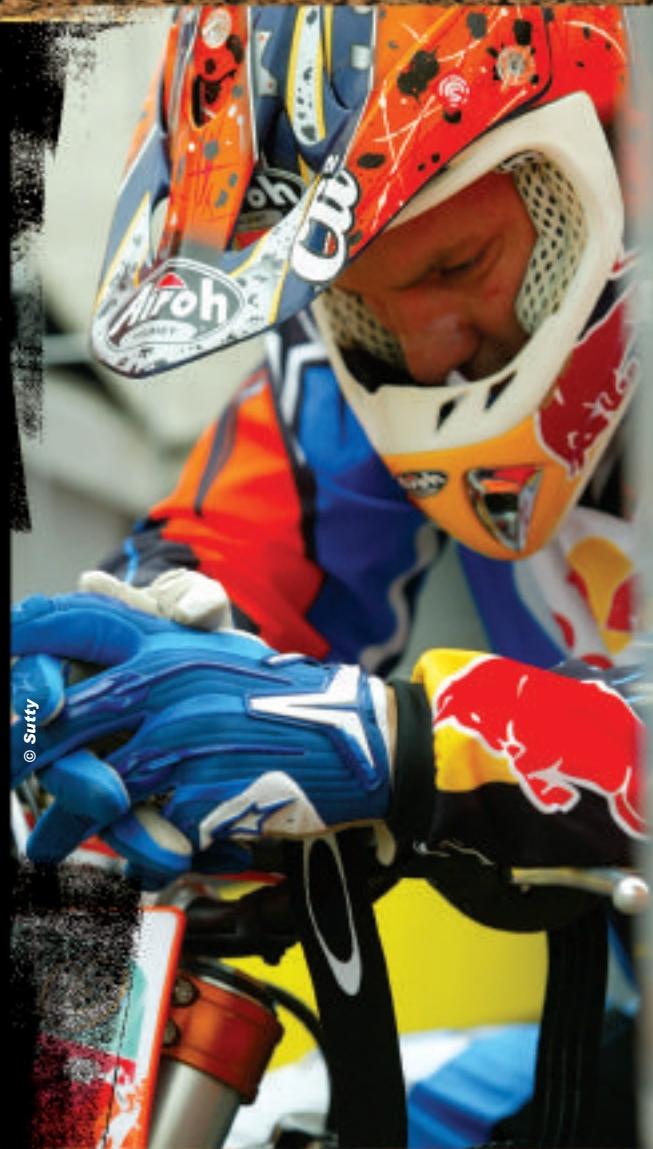
win both motos. Of course Tony feels the same way and Tommy will be starting to step it up now so I think it's going to be good racing. But I'm feeling good, everything has been going to plan, I'm happy, I'll just take it race by race and hopefully by the end I'll come out on top."

At Mantova in February it was already evident that Tyla could now find the 'on' switch as and when he chose. "Yes, I have learnt to be able to step it up in a race and find half-a-second just like that when I need to do it. I can do it straight away now, it's something I've been working on when I've been doing my bike training. Everything is done with the heart."

Was Tyla surprised how easily he could control Cairoli during the early races? "I don't know what Tony's been doing. He admitted himself that he wanted to get ready for MX1 in '09 but he is racing for the MX2 title this year. He obviously is looking at it differently but I would have stayed on the MX2 bike and concentrated on this year first. There's enough time at the end of the season to get ready strengthwise for the 450. For me it would be no rush."

"But I have definitely lifted my game since last year. And I needed to if I wanted to win in MX2. I know that I still have what it takes to be world champion in MX2 and that is why I wanted to do everything properly this year. I want to be the best rider on the track and hopefully at the end I will have the most points and be champion. That's the goal."

"I have an open account with MX2. I want to seal that bill this year before I do anything else!"



It's been a tough season but
Chad Reed's come through it
and finished on top of the box



NEVER SAY DIE!

SINCE HE LEFT HIS NATIVE AUSTRALIA AT THE AGE OF 18, CHAD REED HAS HAD TO PROVE HIMSELF TIME AND TIME AGAIN – AND THIS REFUSAL TO QUIT HAS JUST EARNED HIM HIS SECOND AMA SX CROWN

Racer X's editors at large. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SXMX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of

STATESIDE



Chad Reed is a person just like the rest of us but there's something inside him that not many other people have. What drives the Aussie is hard to understand if you don't have it yourself. It drove him to leave home at 18 years of age to head to Europe and take on the GPs with the ultimate goal of racing in America. He left his family and friends behind and he knew nothing about anything except that he wanted to race motorcycles.

Now, eight years later, he's a two-time AMA SX champion – although it's not been easy. Through trials and tribulations both professionally and personally, Reed has prevailed and today he is a genuinely happy man, secure in his place in the world and secure in who he is.

We talked to him a couple days after he clinched his second AMA Supercross title.

DBR: As well as all of the other guys out there you were racing against, you've faced a lot of adversity on your own. How has this year felt in that regard compared to years past?

CR: "This year felt really special, just because of the ups and downs that we encountered along the way. The battle coming into the season really looked good and I actually felt really good about myself. I felt like I had done my homework in the off-season and I was really, really motivated and just really focused and I was excited to kind of tackle a whole new season."

"We had a new bike that was much, much more competitive than it was in previous years. GL [Grant Langston] took it to an outdoor championship, he took it to the US Open championship, I won in Bercy and then I won the Supercross championship. It's done a lot of winning. It's been really successful and it was neat to be in that position and to just kind of end the season on a high with winning. I went through a lot of ups and downs and bumps and bruises along the way and we're the champs. It's a neat feeling."

DBR: What race would you consider to be your best of the season?

CR: "I think the best of the season was Indianapolis. That was probably my most dominant performance of the year. That probably wasn't the most important race, though. There are so many of them. Nights like Detroit, to come out and get 12th was impressive. I was really, really hurting. Right after my heat race I came in and I cried to my mechanic and said 'I don't think I can do this'. Every other time I'd been able to put myself out there and grit it out but I couldn't get through that heat race. It was impossible."

"So I took advantage of my provisional status and then I went to the Main and crashed in the first turn. I was just like 'what do I do now?' I just tried to put my head down and go for it. I knew Kevin [Windham] wasn't winning so I knew there were five points still on the table that he was leaving out there and I knew he wasn't doing his job so I had to do mine the best I could. And to get 12th with a broken scapula and after spending four hours in the hospital with blood coming from my lungs, that was quite an achievement right there."



DBR: It almost seems like your career as a whole can almost be described in one word – persistent. You just keep plugging away. It seems like that's been your entire life.

CR: "It is. I was taught from a kid never, ever to give up and the feeling of sitting in the stands and watching your race leave the gate, that's the worst feeling ever. I remember when I was a kid, I was on a 125 at a supercross back in Australia and it was in my hometown. I had all my family in town and I came up short on a triple in practice and broke my wrist. It was hurting like hell and all day long I told my mom and dad 'oh, it hurts a little bit' but it was the size of a basketball."

"All I wanted to do was go race in front of my friends and stuff! I actually won the race and the next day it was hurting so bad that when I woke up I had my mom take me to the hospital and they put a cast on it and I was off the bike for six weeks. I don't know if I have a pretty high pain threshold or if it's just that I love the sport and don't give up. I think for me emotional pain is a hell of a lot more painful than physical pain that you go through for 17 minutes of a 20-lap Main Event."

DBR: Is this as good as you've ever been?

CR: "I think this year I came in really prepared. I felt like this year I had really moved on and I'd learned a lot. People don't really understand what it's like to be...when I first came here, everyone loved me. It was awesome. It was amazing. And never once have I ever put myself in a position where I thought that people were hating on me because I wasn't American. I've always taken on this country like it's my own and respected it for that. It gave me a great life and an opportunity to never have to work in my life. I love that."

"To go through what I went through last year, with doing a supercross-only deal and the hate that people were putting on me and showing up at the Motocross des Nations in fat suits and that kind of stuff, it just seemed like everything that I'd worked for – and everything that I'd loved in the sport – I hated. I needed to get away from it. I needed to step away and find out who I was and what made me tick. The racing side of it wasn't enjoyable anymore."

"Last year was a real soul-searching year for me and I came out this year and I wanted to win. I wanted to give it everything I had and, win or lose, I wanted to leave the event happy and proud of my performance. I can honestly say that I did do that. I gave it everything I had at every race – [at] Daytona I rode the wheels off that thing. I jumped the finish line the second-to-last lap and nobody else did it that race. I just felt like the race went on and on and I just got better and better and felt amazing out there. I was bummed that the bike broke but I was so proud. Emotionally, I won that race. I kicked Kevin's ass by a minute and 17 seconds and that felt good."





DBR: If you could get in a time machine and go back and give yourself advice in 2002 would you do it?

CR:

"

You know what? I really wouldn't. I wouldn't change it. I've had some life experiences that have been great and phenomenal but I've also had the downs in my life. I feel like I've learned a lot in a short amount of time. I've lived a lot of different experiences – I've lived a year in Europe and I'm going on seven years here – and I'm only 26 years old. It's been an amazing experience. You take the good with the bad.

"

I came here with a dream to race motorcycles and be the best in the world. I just came here and was just a pure racer. I was the real deal and I think I can hold my head high and say that proudly. I give it everything I've got – hurt or not – and I really feel that nothing really fazes me anymore, you know? I feel like I've been through it all and I'm really proud of what I've achieved this year."

DBR:

What is it about the 2008 YZ450F that made it so much easier to ride fast in supercross this year over last year's bike?

CR:

"

When Yamaha first went to the aluminium frame, just like Honda, we had issues. The first issue was dealing with the rigidity of the bike and how stiff it was. We could never get the feeling that I was after – the feeling that I had in 2003 and 2004 when I think we were really dominant on the YZ250. This year, they had changed some things with the bike materialwise and there were a lot of things that we learned between 2005 and now.

"

It just seemed like it worked a lot better and I was able to gain confidence in the turns and in the whoops so we were able to work hard on the same things we were good at previously before we were having issues. That was the biggest thing, just really working on turning and the handling of the motorcycle. The engine has always been great.

"

This off-season I didn't test one engine part. We changed pipe companies and that was it. That was my engine testing, pretty much [laughs]. Throughout the season we were able to achieve our goals with the turning and the handling and then we moved forward on some engine testing as we went into the season so it was important. It was a blessing to get the '08 bike, for sure."

DBR:

How do you see the state of supercross today?

CR:

"

I think this year was just a lot like 2003 or 2004 – a lot of guys got hurt and that's not really good for the sport. You always want the best out there racing and fans come to watch the best. When you take a lot of guys – I think there were seven factory guys hurt this year – that kind of hurts a little bit. But as a whole I think it's doing great. We've got some great sponsors that are actually supporting the events and I think Live Nation is learning a little bit and working with Dirt Wurx to figure out what works on the track and what doesn't.

"

As for us riders, we're always going to complain, you know? [Laughs]

Whether the track's good or not we're going to complain and that's just part of it. It's part of racing. I'm excited about it, though. We had a live event at the beginning of the year and for some reason Vegas wasn't live this year and that kind of sucks but I think just to have one live event is a start. I think we need to go racing during the day if we want to have live events that work. That's about it. I'm proud to be a part of supercross. I grew up watching it on TV and it's the only place I ever wanted to be."

DBR:

There were some people behind me in the press box from Australia sending a feed of your championship Down Under. What's that like to be such a big deal back home?

CR:

"

Yeah, it was a big deal. The TV that was out here was Channel 9 and that's a really, really big channel in Australia. I was really excited. They were there from Friday through Saturday night and they were there for the press conference so they kind of caught the whole supercross experience. That's definitely the first time for me. Over the years it's been getting bigger and bigger and much more popular in Australia but it's just really neat to see all that come to life.

"

I've seen my Australian image change a lot. It went from the kid from a small town who was training and working hard to being the third-highest [paid] sportsman in the country. It's just changed a lot over time and it's been an amazing experience – it's great for the sport and great for the country. I'm excited to be a part of it."

DBR: It's good for you, too...

CR:

"

It's awesome for me! It's put me in a great position. There was a lot more behind the supercross-only contract than people give me credit for. I wasn't bitching out on the Nationals, believe me. I would've had the national championship last year. I love GL [Grant Langston] to death but I would've won that title if it would've played out the way it did when I was there.

"

But then I don't think I would've been as strong this year because nothing would've changed. I wouldn't have been able to experience what I experienced last year and move on. But with going supercross-only, I just had a lot of things that I wanted to have happen – my Australian Supercross Series for one and I'm committed to three years with that. James Stewart's just signed a supercross-only deal and I only hope that he gets the hatred that I did so that he can experience that [laughs]."

DBR:

Do you think he will? Honestly? Personally I think the Australian thing plays a factor...

CR:

"

Maybe it does. I don't know. I mean, maybe I don't want to believe that. Maybe that's real. I've never really felt that, just from when I first got here. I mean, yeah, people thought I was cocky on my Lites bike and whatever else but when I went to the 250 class, I think everybody was cheering for me and they were boozing for Ricky [Carmichael]."

DBR:

What's left to accomplish?

CR:

"

For me it's just about trying to get the race wins – trying to add up some race wins and some championships. I think if you win races championships will come and I'm really, really excited about the feeling that I have right now. I feel like I'm in such a different place than I was at this time last year. A lot of stuff's going to happen between now and next year's season and I'm excited to go out and be a part of that.

"

I want to come out swinging next year. I have a lot of motivation right now. I'm just going to have a good time this summer, work real hard and I think – with all respect to my competitors and to Kevin [Windham] – James is going to be my main competition out there and I think I'm ready to take him on. I want to beat him up. I want to beat him straight up and I want to hold that #1 plate up and say 'I kicked your ass!' [laughs]"

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Blast off at Hangtown with Ivan Tedesco (#9) just about getting the drop on Davi Millsaps (#118), James Stewart (#7) and Ben Townley (#101)



HE'S BACK!

JAMES STEWART RETURNS TO AMA ACTION AS THE OUTDOOR SEASON KICKS OFF AND – SURPRISE, SURPRISE – HE'S UNBEATEN AFTER TWO ROUNDS AND FOUR RACES...

A few weeks ago Chad Reed was the toast of the town in America. He'd just topped off a successful AMA SX championship and had become something of a media darling in the process. But now that the outdoors have started all the talk is about Monster Energy Kawasaki's James Stewart – who, incidentally, looks to have signed with Reed's L&M team for next year.

That's how things are in the USA. With two series, both of relatively equal importance, it takes the saying 'you're only as good as your last race' a step further. Now that Reed is out and Stewart is back it seems many have forgotten exactly how big of a deal Reed's championship was and how fast Reed would be if he were racing outdoors.

After two weekends off from racing following the AMA SX season finale in Las Vegas, the AMA Nationals launch at Glen Helen Raceway – the site of the season finale last year. Despite only racing twice since July of last year, Stewart seems ready. The first time since July was at the opening AMA Supercross of the season where he finished second to San Manuel Yamaha's Chad Reed. The second was a week later when he beat Reed in Phoenix. However, he finally had to get his knee fixed following practice at round three and there's been a lot of doubt as to his status in the months since.



AMA NATS WRAP



After four races Stewart has yet to be beaten – just don't try to tell him he makes it look easy



Stewart needed surgery to repair his left knee. The normal recovery time for such a surgery is about six months. He had four months to get ready for Glen Helen. Somehow, with the help of top doctors and his trainer Aldon Baker, Stewart shows up at Glen Helen more than just ready in terms of his knee injury – he is also fast and in shape.

However, Glen Helen is one of Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Mike Alessi's favourite tracks and it shows as Alessi grabs the holeshot in both motos to lead Stewart and the rest of the pack around turn one. However, also in both motos, Stewart is quickly past Alessi and into the lead. In the first moto Stewart waits all the way until the second turn to make the pass while in the second moto Stewart passes Alessi before they exit the first turn.

If not for Stewart's feats of balance and agility out front the racing can easily been described as boring as Stewart leads every lap of both motos to score the win in his first race back from injury and take the points lead heading into round two in Sacramento, California. He's so dominant at Glen Helen that there's speculation he may be reaching for Ricky Carmichael's record of an undefeated season.

"I just feel blessed to be here and I'm having fun," Stewart says. "If I can win the championship and win some more races that would be just as good. I don't really look at that other stuff. If you start looking ahead things happen and I feel like I just need to have fun and ride like I did today and I'll be fine. If that [24-0] happens, which I don't believe it will, we'll tackle that when we get there."

Alessi hangs on for second overall with a 2-2 score while third goes to Honda Red Bull Racing's Davi Millsaps with a 3-3 and fourth to Stewart's team-mate Timmy Ferry with a 4-4.

Despite his dominance at Glen Helen, Stewart isn't looking to let up on the competition at Hangtown where he grabs the opening moto holeshot and immediately checks out while privateer Frenchman Steve Boniface runs second in the early going, holding off the factory Honda of Millsaps.

A couple of laps into the race Millsaps makes the move for second where he stays until about the halfway point when Stewart's Monster Energy Kawasaki team-mate Timmy Ferry passes him for the runner-up spot after starting near the tail end of the top 10. Millsaps hangs on for third over team-mate Ivan Tedesco and privateer Sean Collier.

Round one runner-up Mike Alessi of the Rockstar/Makita Suzuki squad is running at the tail end of the top five early on when a fall damages his handlebars, forcing him to pit. He returns to the track in 24th and is only able to grab 16th by the finish, earning five points (and, more importantly, losing 20 to Stewart).

Stewart doesn't get the start he wants in the second moto and he runs fifth behind the entire Honda Red Bull Racing team of Millsaps (first), Andrew Short (second), Tedesco (third) and Ben Townley (fourth). However, only a few turns into the race, Stewart fights his way into the lead, only to have Millsaps pass him back again. Stewart quickly regains the lead before the end of lap one and from there he isn't headed again.

Millsaps and Tedesco battle it out over second place and Tedesco looks to have it locked down until Ferry comes flying through again. This time Ferry starts outside the top 10 and passes Tedesco for second on lap 13 of 17. So Stewart leads every lap of 450cc competition to take the win followed by Ferry (2-2), Tedesco (4-3), Millsaps (3-5) and Boniface (6-6).

Stewart insists that, despite his leading every single lap of 450cc racing in the four motos run so far in the 2008 MX Nationals, he's not having an easy time of it. "See, that's one thing you guys don't understand. These guys are good. I'd like to see any one of you guys sitting out there race these guys. These guys are good and for you guys to say there's no competition, that's just a letdown – even to myself. We put a lot of hard work into it and these guys do the same thing."

"It's no cakewalk out there. I don't know where you guys are getting that from. I train really hard and I bust my behind to get here and Sundays are my easiest days. So for you guys to say there's no competition and that these guys are not on it, that's a disrespect to all of us. Like I said, these guys try just as hard as I do and that's not fair."

Stewart already holds a 20-point lead in the championship with only two rounds down and 10 still to run.



Former world champ Townley is still struggling with injury



Mike Alessi nabs a trademark holeshot at Glen Helen

CAKEWALK?

AFTER STUTTERING FIRST TIME OUT THE DEFENDING CHAMP'S WON THREE ON THE BOUNCE...

As has become the norm on this side of the pond, the Lites (250F) class is proving itself to be quite a bit less predictable than the 450cc class – although defending champ Ryan Villopoto is hoping to change all of that.

At Glen Helen, though, Lites West SX champ Jason Lawrence grabs the holeshot to start the first moto and with a clear track ahead of him he's able to overcome the late-race charge of Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Austin Stroupe and Brett Metcalfe to win the series' opening moto. Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Ryan Dungey is fourth and defending champ Ryan Villopoto comes home fifth.

"It was only like 65 degrees out and the track was smooth," Villopoto reckons. "I'm not saying that did everything but it did make it easier on everybody else to race the track. I got a decent start but in the second turn someone fell in front of me and I think I came out like 11th. With the track being smooth it was hard to pass. Everybody was going fast."

However, Villopoto looks to get that handled for moto two. Dungey grabs the holeshot while Lawrence flounders around at the tail end of the top five. Dungey eventually gives way to Stroupe who goes down while leading, handing it to his team-mate Villopoto who proceeds to take off and leave his competition fighting over second. Stroupe gets up in fourth behind Dungey (second) and Metcalfe (third) while Lawrence loses fifth temporarily to Geico Powersports Honda's Trey Canard.

With the overall on the line for all involved, Stroupe and Lawrence make late-race pushes with Stroupe grabbing third from Metcalfe and Lawrence regaining fifth from Canard and that's how they finish with Villopoto winning the moto over Dungey, Stroupe, Metcalfe and Lawrence.

Adding up the points, Stroupe gets the overall with a 2-3 score over Villopoto's 5-1 and Lawrence's 1-5 while Dungey can only muster fourth despite his 4-2 showing and fifth goes to Metcalfe with a 3-4.

"I came in here with a lot [of goals]," Stroupe says. "I want to win the title. I know it's a lot and it's going to be a long season with Ryan [Villopoto] because he's on the gas and [Ryan] Dungey's going to be strong and Metcalfe's going to be strong. Those guys that were up there, they're going to be there the whole time so I'll just see how it goes. I know next weekend's going to be rough and heat's probably going to play a factor too."

Going into Hangtown the top four are separated by only two points while fifth-placed Metcalfe is only two points further in arrears.

Villopoto gets the start in the opening moto at Hangtown and promptly checks out, leaving the rest to quarrel over second place. Stroupe starts out second in the early going followed by Dungey and Nico Izzi, Branden Jesseman, Metcalfe and Star Racing Yamaha's Jake Moss. Lawrence rounds the first lap 15th.

Around the halfway point Stroupe and Dungey begin swapping second place until Dungey is finally able to secure the runner-up spot on lap eight of 17. Metcalfe works his way by Izzi to sit fourth before falling into the clutches of a freight-train battle for fifth with Jesseman, Geico Powersports Honda's Jake Weimer and Lawrence giving chase at around the halfway point. On lap 13 Lawrence manages to pass all three of them in one lap, securing fifth for himself. Jesseman finishes sixth, Weimer seventh (for the third moto in a row) and Izzi eighth.

Moto two starts much like moto one with Villopoto out front – but this time he has Lawrence right on his tail at the start. Unfortunately for Lawrence, though, he can't match Villopoto's pace and Villopoto begins to inch away. However, no-one else on the track is a match for Lawrence either and he cruises to second in the moto and third overall via a 5-2 score. Dungey starts around the tail end of the top 10 and works his way to third by the end while Stroupe finishes fourth and Metcalfe fifth.

After four motos, two-time and defending Lites MX champ Villopoto has a three-moto win streak and a decent points lead going into round three in Texas next Sunday. It's looking relatively easy for Ryan Villopoto right now.

"I'm not going to say that Ryan [Dungey] and them aren't as good as Ben [Townley] was last year but it was tougher then in a lot of ways. Me and Ben were on the same team and it was a tough year racing against your competitor that is also your team-mate. But in some ways it was also kind of nice because you could sort of trust him."

Heading into round three, Villopoto holds a nine-point lead over Dungey with Stroupe on 80, Lawrence on 79 and Metcalfe on 72. It's still anyone's game but it may not be for very long at this rate.

Ryan Villopoto is already looking good to retain his Lites title



Super-consistent Timmy Ferry is second in the Motocross championship standings



Jason Lawrence takes a gate-to-flag win in the opening Lites race of the year

SERIES STANDINGS

MOTOCROSS

		MOTOCROSS	LITES
1	James Stewart	100 points	1 Ryan Villopoto 91 points
2	Timmy Ferry	80	2 Ryan Dungey 82
3	Davi Millsaps	76	3 Austin Stroupe 80
4	Ivan Tedesco	68	4 Jason Lawrence 79
5	Mike Alessi	67	5 Brett Metcalfe 72
6	Steve Boniface	49	6 Jake Weimer 53
7	Michael Byrne	49	7 Trey Canard 47
8	Ben Townley	42	8 Kyle Cunningham 40
9	Jeff Alessi	40	9 Branden Jesseman 36
10	Nick Wey	40	10 Broc Tickle 32

After two rounds Ryan Dungey is heading the chasing pack in the Lites division



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CRYSTALBALLS!

MYSTIC MATTHES MAKES HIS PREDICTIONS FOR THE REST OF THE AMA OUTDOOR SEASON – JUST DON'T GO RUNNING OFF TO THE BOOKIES...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

Here are my predictions for the rest of the AMA Nationals... Mt Morris, June 15: The series gets a bomb dropped on it when Damon Bradshaw comes out of retirement and wins both motos going away. He doesn't have problem with the muddy conditions as he's actually in his monster truck. James Stewart announces that he won't be racing the rest of the series as he's trapped in his house and buried in money from his new team. He goes on to say that he can't find his man friend Rado either.

The Lites class is won by Ryan Villopoto in dominant fashion going 1-1 on the day. Justin Brayton finishes a career best 2-2 on a KTM. Jason Lawrence has a strong ride going but pulls out halfway in each moto because he gets a MySpace friend request he has to answer.

Lakewood, June 28: A national is under the lights for the first time and the reviews are mixed. Andrew Short wins his kinda hometown race but the victory is marred as Mike Alessi's winning the second moto and looks good for the overall but he accidentally follows a fire fly and goes off course. As of this date, nobody has found him.

The Lites class has a controversial finish when Brett Metcalfe and Josh Grant come together right before the finish line and start throwing haymakers. They both roll across the line while wrestling and the AMA can't decide which guy should win. Trey Canard is the first guy to physically ride his ride across the line and is finally scored the winner.

Red Bud, July 6: Nick Wey, who's been struggling bad this year on his KTM, bolts Kees van der Ven's shock from his 1985 125 on the 450 and goes 7-8 at his hometown track. Multi-time champ Jeff Stanton comes out of retirement and is so disgusted to finish 3-4 his normally happy demeanour is replaced by the old 'race face' Jeff and he tells a Make-a-Wish kid to pound sand. BT101 wins the race and Cody Cooper, Steve Van Zylun and a King brother carry him away on their shoulders.

The Lites class again has some controversy when Ryan Dungey is trailing Jason Lawrence on the last lap of the second moto and a single bolt of lightning comes down and strikes J-Law. The sky immediately becomes clear again and Dungey (and dragons) takes the overall.

Budds Creek, July 13: Chad Reed, wanting to show everybody how he can come off the couch to win, actually races a Pro Circuit couch. He has a hard time getting good starts and struggles in the turns but finishes a respectable 5-8. After the race he doesn't even get off the couch before the party starts. Tim Ferry, in a repeat of 2003, finishes 1-38 and Davi Millsaps grabs the overall with a 2-1. Nick Wey climbs up the results chart even further with the addition of Heinz Kinigadner's subframe off of his championship winning 1985 KTM 250. He goes 4-5 on the day.

The Lites class is a titanic battle in the first moto between RV, Metcalfe, Branden Jessemen and Austin Stroupe. Simon Cudby is needed to break the four-way tie as he gets a picture of all of them crossing the line together. The win goes to Jessemen but nobody can hear anything as he just mumbles on the podium. The second moto is more of the same but RV wins when his mechanic installs one bigger main jet.

Unadilla, July 20: Nick Wey completes the turn around and goes 1-1 on the day, giving KTM their first ever big bike win. The transformation is complete when he bolts in Capt Kurt Nicoll's motor out of his 1991 KTM 500. Wey soars so high out of Gravity Cavity that he actually downsides Screw U and keeps on going.

In Lites class action Ryan Dungey wins the overall going 2-2. Jake Weimer goes 40-1 thereby keeping up with his consistent supercross season. Ryan Villopoto wins the first moto and in an effort to show that he can ride anything and win, grabs team owner Mitch Payton's wheelchair and attempts to race. Predictably, it's a disaster as he can't get up Gravity Cavity on the first lap.

Washougal, July 27: Josh Hill wins his hometown race and breaks down on the podium lamenting the loss of his buddy J-Law from the lightning strike a few races back. Halfway through his speech he hears a cop siren and runs away. Grant Langston makes his return from injuries and goes 2-3 for second but says he could've won if only he had a 2009 YZ450.

The Lites class goes off with a bang as Ryan Villopoto mounts an elephant gun on his handlebars and sets it off when the 30-second board turns sideways. Everybody ducks for cover and RV takes off with the first moto win. He tries the same tactic for the second moto but fails to notice the banana that is stuffed in the gun, courtesy of Ryan Morais. Josh Grant takes the win.

Millville, August 17: Mike Alessi returns to the series and explains that in Lakewood he just wanted to get a jump on everybody and headed straight to Millville to camp out and prepare for this race. He's been living with the Whoop Monster in the trees behind Holy Schmidt for the last two months. It pays off as he wins the race going away. John Martin still makes Mike pick up garbage later on Sunday night.

Lites class is all hometown boy Ryan Dungey and he goes 1-1 in a dominating ride. He goes on to explain that he wants to thank pretty much everybody there and throws out Target gift cards from the podium.

Southwick, August 24: The series moves to the most demanding track right in the heat of the summer and immediately it's seen as a bad idea as only five guys finish the second 450 moto. The five guys are John Dowd, Pat Barton, Mike Treadwell, Keith Johnson (no, not the New Mexico one) and Tim Ferry. That's the overall finish order as well.

Lites riders do not suffer the same fate as the big boys and most of the



Mystic Matthes – don't believe a word he says...

riders finish. RV and the newest, hottest amateur rider to graduate to pro, PJ Larsen, battle it out. Davey Coombs calls PJ "the best amateur rider I've ever seen".

Dungey's title hopes take a severe dive when he straps on his helmet complete with Target logos and Villopoto hits the bull's-eye with the prize he bought himself after Budds Creek. Luckily, RV has run out of actual guns to purchase so now he's using lasers.

Steel City, August 31: The final battle for all the marbles takes place and Tim Ferry wins the race and get sweet redemption, clinching the Motocross title. Timmy's championship is won by attrition as he gets 12 seconds in the 24 motos.

The Ryans (Dungey and Villipoto) duke it out for the title of best Lites rider in the world [ahem, I think you mean America – SL] and finish with identical 2-1, 1-2 scores. They tie for the race win and tie for the series championship. Steve Whitelock comes back and awards them half-a-plaque each and calls them co-champions. Mitch Payton is furious with this ruling and files a protest against Dungey for having an illegal muffler. He wins the protest but gets sued by Suzuki because it's a Pro Circuit muffler. So he then sues himself for protesting and removes the original protest because he needs the money back after suing himself. In the end a compromise is made and Villopoto is awarded the title.



FALSE START!

WITH JUST FIVE POINTS FROM THE FIRST FOUR MOTOS, 2008 LOOKED OVER BEFORE IT HAD REALLY BEGUN FOR SEBASTIEN POURCEL – AND THEN HE STARTED WINNING RACES...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson



© Sutty

After struggling at the first two GPs there's now light at the end of the tunnel for Sébastien POURCEL



Pourcel had to wait until Portugal to show his speed under race conditions

It can't be easy when your little brother's already been world champ but Sébastien Pourcel breezed through the second half of his maiden MX1 campaign last summer and has already bounced back from a torrid start to 2008 to establish himself as one of the genuine title candidates.

"Those first two GPs were difficult for me. In Holland I had too much pressure and crashed a lot. That was not me at Valkenswaard. I had trained so much in sand during the winter to improve my technique and speed but I let the pressure get to me. Practice and qualification at Bellpuig were good. I was really fast all day Saturday, then it rained for the race and it was difficult. Bad start, crash, no points – there's not a lot to say."

Seb is not one to look for excuses. Was Spain a lottery? "No way. Ramon won, Philippaerts finished second, so the best riders were still at the front. It was my own fault that I didn't have a whole lot of points from the first two GPs but, before you ask, yes, Agueda was a relief."

"I was fastest again in all of the practices and qualification on Saturday, just like in Spain, so I knew my speed was good. I just had to put it together in a race and I did that at Agueda. Now I proved to myself that I can win on Sunday also but I must also be consistent and make podiums in the races I do not win."

And the 23-year-old did just that in Bulgaria,

rebounding from poor starts and a series of mishaps which interrupted his first moto charge. "MacKenzie ran me off the track. He was only thinking about me, he didn't want to take the corner. That annoyed me and I was still thinking about it when I lost the front wheel in that turn after the finish."

It was one of those situations which can change an entire campaign as Clement Desalle ran over his shoulder. "Desalle reacted quickly to turn inside me but I was rolling that way too. The tighter he turned, the more I rolled. I got lucky, it could have been much worse." And Seb got back on for eighth which, followed up by a second moto victory, got him that podium again.

The reward for consistency was brought home last year as wins and podiums suddenly gave Sébastien an outside chance of the title in August after a typically sketchy first half of the year. "Winning those GPs at Faenza and Namur last year was really good for my confidence but I not only proved to myself that I could win GPs, I was also consistent with 1-2-1-2 in four consecutive races."

"The first win is a sweet memory and the second one is the confirmation but to be up there four races in a row was really something. Win, DNF, win, DNF is not good – in the end you have nothing from that except a lot of wins but the people remember the champions. Now I started to do it this year I hope I can continue it."

It's not just the wins that have been impressive, it's also the way he's achieved them. "I didn't want to push too hard at the start of the races in Agueda. It was the first hot race we had had this year so it was difficult for all of us to know where we were physically and I didn't want to be tired at the end of the races. I didn't even have Valkenswaard and Bellpuig as a guide because I had not been able to do the races there to the finish but in the end I had plenty left in both races at Agueda. I pushed hard at the end and still was not tired. I would have liked a double win but I left my challenge one lap too late in the first moto – I had to take a risk and made a mistake."

"In the second race I was riding smooth and was waiting for the last five laps to push hard onto MacKenzie but in the end I did not need to. Billy made a mistake and that made it easier for me."

And the victory had special significance for the GPKR team after the early-season controversy when new boy Kevin Strijbos displayed public dissatisfaction with the bike.

"It was a good feeling not only for me but also for the whole team. Apart from Kevin we are a tightly-knit team and we have been together for a couple of years now so Portugal really was one for the entire team. And for we French the spirit is very important."

"I don't personally have any problems with >>

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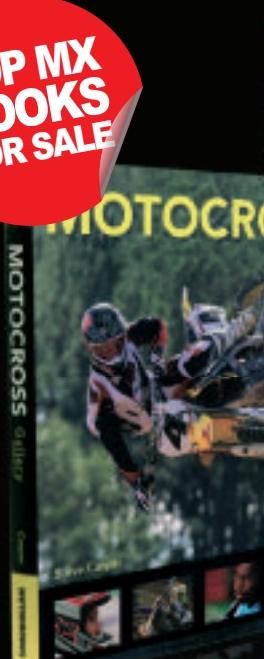


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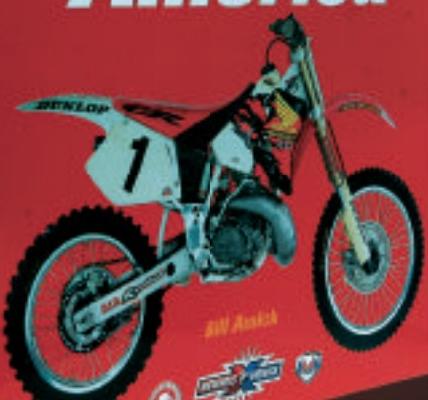


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Strijbos. I try my best every week – I think we all do – but that win really did say to everyone the bike is really good. I can take pole, I can win, so there is not a problem with the bike. There was a problem with Kevin and nobody knew what to do so it made things complicated and tense. But now we know the bike is good, everyone can see where the problem lies. I think Kevin is not okay in his head. That is his problem. But I am not angry with Kevin, it can happen to any of us."

Sebastien had made a great initial impact on the GP scene as a teenager but the momentum seemed to disappear until he switched to MX1 last term. "Yes, I changed to MX1 to find a new goal. In MX2 I was riding good but I was making too many mistakes. It was time for a change. I had ridden the class for several years and I had never arrived at the very front. I was always fast

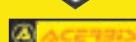
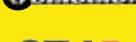
but I made too many mistakes.

"For sure, two years ago I was not really strong in my head. I think if I went back to MX2 now I would be stronger and faster. I don't quit races now unless I have to, before I would pull out if something went wrong. I think I am just getting older and more experienced."

But much more changed. When Sebastien moved to the 450F his entire stance on the bike altered too – the elbows, previously held low, were suddenly up above the bars, the shoulders controlling the aggressive power. "It was not a conscious change. I simply found the 450 so much easier to ride. I didn't need to push so hard, it was just the natural way to ride a 450. And it seems to work!"

Sebastien is not looking for excuses for his poor start to the current campaign but he >>

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OH BROTHER!

MIXED FAMILY FORTUNES...

It was no coincidence that Sébastien's late season title surge last year faltered when younger brother Christophe was seriously hurt at the Irish GP.

"I think it affected me mentally more than I wanted to admit to myself. It's okay now but it was a shock at the time. But Christophe is coming along much better now. He wants to ride again sometime fairly soon, no pressure, just when he feels he is ready and the doctors say it is okay."

"He still cannot go to the toilet normally because his bladder is still paralysed but his spirit has returned."

With his dad, brother Christophe and renowned MX journo Pascal Haudiquert (seated)



Seb shows typical 100 per cent commitment in Bulgaria

FALSE START!

is quite clear that he wants to revert to his old ways next winter. "I didn't go to the USA last winter because we wanted to do a lot of testing in Spain. That was interesting and we needed to do it because of the changes to the bike but it was not the USA for the training. The US is so much better. There are really good tracks, the weather also.

"The weather was also good in Spain but the tracks were not prepped, they were just hardpack with no lines. It was pretty much the same as when I ride in the south of France. It was a good experience for the testing but I definitely want to prepare in America again next winter, just for the tracks. I have kept my physical training the same for two or three years now anyway. It works well so I don't want to change it."

So, having dragged himself back into the points hunt with a series of startling performances, where does Séb go from now? "Like I said at the press conference in Portugal, I am still a long way off the pace in >>



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Seb's confident he's still riding within his limits

the championship but Josh was 107 points ahead last year and didn't win the title. Anything can happen and as long as I keep putting in big scores every week from now on then anything is possible. The championship is long and there are still a lot of races to come.

"Now I have to remain consistent and focused at every GP and not make mistakes. I don't make a lot of mistakes but just one can be enough to end your hopes, particularly on a 450. It takes two times 40 minutes to win a GP; it takes one second to get hurt."

"I am certainly confident that I have the speed to pull the points back but I take every GP one at a time and get the maximum out of each one. I am not looking too far with a plan. And I still have more speed. I was not on the limit in the race at Agueda. I think I can ride even faster than that and still be safe. I try to do that every

time but I guess it doesn't always work."

Sébastien is France's #1 rider but, just like with the UK, this hardly makes him a household name in his homeland. "I prefer to be the best in the world. There is not much awareness of motocross in France other than among the devotees. There never was. People know the names of the best tennis players, the best footballers but not motocross. Our sport is still closed to those who love it."

"Maybe we can try to expand. It will be difficult but I guess we have to try to find more outside sponsors. If I could do some television during the year it would be better for me and also for the sport in general. My brother and I are trying to do that."

And "best in the world" does not stop at a world title in the eyes of Seb. "Even if I can continue to ride faster than everybody else in the

GPs, I must still look for more speed. There are also riders like Stewart in the US who can ride fast and if I race against him one day I want to be faster than him. Then, if I can beat the Americans too, I really would be the fastest rider in the world. So I try to push every time I ride."

"I would like to go to America and that is why I try to be faster every time. Maybe I can go there but I know that I will have to work even harder than I do now if I want to go there. I don't think I have to be any better prepared than I am at the moment but they have a race every week, the season is long and it is really difficult to be at your best for such a long period."

"Maybe I will never go to America. I would like to but I am not going to give myself a timetable. Even if I am world champion I still have to beat the best in America, Stewart or whoever it is, to be the best in the world."



DREW WHO?

COMPETITION MIND COACH

Neil Drew is a former MX and enduro racer and a qualified sports mind coach. At present he is coaching two national champions and several GP competitors and has helped many amateur and professional athletes from all over the world. He can be contacted via DBR or through his website at www.competitionmind.co.uk



IN THE ZONE!

TO SOME IT'S STANDARD PROCEDURE, TO OTHERS IT'S AS MYTHICAL AS SKUZZLEBUTT* – BUT AT SOME POINT OR ANOTHER WE'VE ALL BEEN IN 'THE ZONE'...

Words by Neil Drew Photo by Sutty

Virtually everyone has heard of the term 'the zone' – in fact we mentioned it in the very first of these articles back in March 2007 – and some of you may also have heard the term 'flow' or even 'total flow'.

So what is this seemingly magical place? Many will say that it is one of the most difficult things to achieve with any consistency and that actually it only ever happens by fluke. Rubbish! It is actually something which every single human being has experienced regularly in their lives since they were in nappies.

To understand more of what this alludes to we need to understand what the experience is. The big picture is that it is a state, an emotion, an attitude and a way of being – it is a place of complete concentration where our focus is completely external (the subject of my column in the March 2008 issue).

When a competitor is experiencing the zone they are riding without any internal thoughts, there isn't any internal dialogue going on inside the crash helmet, they ignore and even are totally unaware of any potential distractions, they are feeling relaxed. Many describe this feeling as one of being in total control, of being 100 per cent focused, like their bike is on rails. Competitors experiencing the zone will also tell you that when they are riding everything seems to be so effortless, almost as if it is some sort of daydream, that things seem to be in slow motion, that they can virtually predict what everyone else is going to do before they actually do it! It has also been described as an autopilot mode.

Some of these descriptions may seem a little odd to those who think they haven't experienced this state but you can be assured these are statements that have been made by those who are regularly in this magical place. In the first part of this article we mentioned the fact that everyone has experienced this state so let's look at some everyday examples of the many

different ways that you and everyone else experiences the zone.

You know those times when you are working on your bike and time seems to just fly by – you know exactly what you are doing without having to think about it, everything seems to follow a natural sequence and then you get to the end of the job or task and wonder where the time has gone? Sometimes you might even have to think whether or not you have done one or two of the smaller jobs or done up a nut or bolt and upon investigation you find that you have but cannot remember doing so? Well that's the zone.

Another excellent example is when we are driving. There are times when we have been driving and we cannot remember the last few miles, sometimes even driving past an exit that we wanted to take off a motorway. Watch little children when they are playing at something they really enjoy and appear to be completely engrossed – you attempt to get their attention and they seem to be ignoring you. All of these are naturally occurring examples of the zone.

So what stops competitors from entering into this magical state? The answer to this is simple – they stop themselves. One of the biggest factors in a competitor sabotaging their own competition is because they analyze, they think too much, they look for distractions, they question themselves and their abilities and they compare themselves to others and will even check who it is they are competing against. When any of this happens the brain is then focused on something else, tension creeps into the muscles of the upper body and the emotional state usually changes to anxiety.

Imagine reading a book or watching your favourite television programme while someone is attempting to have a conversation with you or is asking you a question, even imagine working on your bike and you've got that flow thing going and the phone rings and puts you off. When you

eventually get back into what you were doing you have to take a few moments to recapture what point you were at and then think about what it was that you were going to do next. Eventually you will either get back into it or even sometimes just stop what you were doing and come back to it later. This can often be very frustrating and we dislike it when it happens, yet competitors do it to themselves all the time and get irritated and frustrated at themselves for performing differently to how they expected.

How then do we control this state? Apart from the obvious things mentioned above about self distraction and thinking too much, you need to be able to recognize when you are out of the zone, then you empty your mind and focus only on the job at hand with total concentration – and the best place to begin this awareness is before the start. Have a look at the best competitors before any competition and one of the main things you will notice is how they appear so focused – they seem to ignore everyone else around them, almost like they are in a world of their own. They will be running the competition through in their minds, they will be focusing on the beliefs they have about themselves, what skills they are going to employ and so on.

Every competitor will at some point have experienced the zone during their competitive career and every competitor is capable of being in this state. The trick to achieving it is in the emptying of the mind and having complete focus on what you are doing. When you experience this state it is one of the most satisfying experiences we can have and it is what every competitor who is familiar with it constantly strives to achieve because with this state comes faster lap times, smoother riding and better results.

* Basket weaving monster with a piece of celery for a hand and Patrick Duffy for a leg... |

BACK TO

THE BIG TEAM BUDGET MAY BE GONE BUT NEVILLE BRADSHAW'S ENJOYING RACING AGAIN – AND IT'S SHOWING IN HIS RESULTS...

Words by SEAN LAWLESS Photos by SUTTY

Money talks and in a class where the folding stuff makes the most noise it's always good to see a privateer mixing it up with the big bucks boys of MX2.

Neville Bradshaw's tasted life on high-profile teams but following a '07 season screwed over by a knee injury – and after seriously considering knocking the whole racing lark on the head – he's running top five in the Maxxis series aboard a DB Racing Honda and having a blast.

"So far it's been a good year, I'm back on the 250F and really enjoying riding it. We're fifth in the championship at the moment and it's getting

quite close now – every weekend I just seem to be getting sixths and sevenths and a lot of people are DNFing and stuff. We've made some changes in the team last week. I've got my old mechanic from Motovision – Matt Hutchins – doing my engines and suspension and it's good to have him back working with me. Just having him around's good."

The South African 24-year-old's first taste of British championship action came back in '03 on the Isle of Wight. The following year he did a deal to race for Scott Gardner's Planet MX team and when the money started to run out halfway through the season Motovision Suzuki's Mark

Chamberlain stepped in.

Nev raced for a couple more years with Motovision – and in '05 earned a place on the SA MXdN team – but niggling injuries never saw him string a full competitive season together. And it was the same deal in '07 when a crooked knee dented his ambitions of making a big impact for PAR Homes Honda and made him consider his future in the sport.

"I've been on a team where you get everything but it doesn't really make that much of a difference – you can have factory suspension but if it's not set up properly then it's no good having it. Last year was a hard year for me – I

Nev's enjoying life again and it shows in his racing



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hurt my knee and I didn't have a very good year and I was going to quit racing because I wasn't giving 100 per cent because I couldn't."

But after hooking up with David Bright he's rediscovered his laidback approach to racing and, despite not having trick parts on tap, Nev's turned his frown upside-down and is quick to see the positives of his situation.

"It's a bit different [being a privateer], you get the freedom of having who you want around you like with Matt. Sometimes it's good to be on a big team when you go to grands prix and European races and stuff like that and the set-up's good and they've got a lot of experience but there's

also a lot of pressure. The team's small, it's still learning but we're going to try and go from strength to strength.

"The bike's good and we're just going to keep on building on it and hopefully when we get back on the hardpack tracks I like we can start pushing for some podiums. We're going to go and work on the engine a bit now – we've got some different heads coming next week so we're going to start testing them and hopefully it'll be good.

"I'm enjoying myself. Last weekend we had a KWS at Dean Moor and I rode both classes on a 250F and I just gave it 100 per cent and I came

away happy and today I didn't get good starts but I gave 100 per cent both motos and came through and passed so many people. As long as I'm giving 100 per cent that's all I can do and that makes me feel good after a race so, yeah, I am having fun. It'll be good to start chipping away at those other guys – there's a lot of factory bikes in that class and we're not far off.

"There's so many people I'd like to thank. Matt Hutchins, my girlfriend and her family do so much for me, all my team, everyone at DB Racing, Andy Lee from Elsworth, Paul Cooper helps me out so much with my training, just everyone who cheers for me at the weekend."

BASICS!

Billy Mac makes it eight from eight in the Maxxis with his double Lyng win

SCOTTISHPOWER!

SWORDY AND BILLY MAC ARE AT IT AGAIN AS THE WEATHER FINALLY TAKES A TURN FOR THE BETTER AT LYNG...

Words by Sean Lawless Photo by Sutty

Finally – after cloud, snow and torrential rain – the sun puts in an appearance for a round of the Maxxis British MX championship. Sunny Lyng in sunny Norfolk is the circuit that's soaking up the rays and, thanks in part to a primetime local TV advertising campaign, there are plenty of spectators lobstering up n'all...

And if the crowd are hot then Stephen Swordy and Billy Mackenzie are roasting as the MX2 and MX1 series leaders scorch to a pair of double wins. For Billy – who's now unbeaten in eight Maxxis races – it's pretty much business as usual but for Swordy – who's by no means had things all his own way this year – his Lyng double could represent the point in the domestic season where he clicks up a gear and clears off.

The opening MX2 moto is all about Swordy. As the gate drops Carl Nunn proves he's still got

razor-sharp reactions but the Molson Kawasaki out-drags the MVR-D Suso Suzuki up the start straight and into the super-fast opening left-hander. From here Swordy's gone and he controls the race from the front to come home a full 20 seconds ahead of KTM UK's Shaun Simpson with Nunny's team-mate Jason Dougan another 50 seconds back in third.

But for a DNF in the very first race of the series Simpson would be level pegging on points with Swordy and for a few brief moments in the second Lyng moto he leads. But Swordy's swiftly back in front and once there it's all over as he extends his advantage over Simpson to 17 seconds at the flag. Nunny comes home third but it's Relentless Suzuki's Lewis Gregory who grabs third overall with a 4-5 card.

Special bravery award goes to UTAG Yamaha.com's Martin Barr who, after breaking

his collarbone just a fortnight before in Spain, grits his teeth for 10-6 finishes to maintain third in the series standings.

Up in MX1 and Billy Mac is untouchable – another fastest lap in qualifying plus another two gate-to-flag wins keep his perfect season going. Brad Anderson takes second in the opener for Swift Suzuki from ARB Kawasaki's Mark Jones. Anderson also claims the second step on the overall podium after finishing third in race two behind third overall (stay with me) James Noble but Jones' second moto is cut short by a collision with a stack of tyres and Tom Church, fourth in the opener, also goes out early.

Special bravery award #2 goes to Pioneer Yamaha's Wayne Smith who crosses the line fifth in race two, despite losing his goggles on the opening lap after a rock pops the lens out. Gawdblimey, Embo would be praaaaard...



SERIESSTANDINGS

MX1>>

1	Billy MacKenzie (Monster CAS Honda)	200 points
2	James Noble (KTM UK)	135
3	Brad Anderson (Swift Suzuki)	131
4	Mark Jones (ARB Kawasaki)	126
5	Tom Church (Molson Kawasaki)	124
6	Wayne Smith (Pioneer Emberson Yamaha)	110
7	Mark Hucklebridge (MotoXtreme Kawasaki)	98
8	Mark Eastwood (Wiseco Honda)	92
9	Kenneth Gundersen (UTAG Yamaha.com)	78
10	Michael Phillips (NA Robinsons KTM)	71

MX2>>

1	Stephen Sword (Molson Kawasaki)	179 points
2	Shaun Simpson (KTM UK)	157
3	Martin Barr (UTAG Yamaha.com)	137
4	Elliot Banks-Browne (Swift Suzuki)	105
5	Neville Bradshaw (DB Honda)	100
6	Jason Dougan (Suso MVR-D Suzuki)	90
7	Carl Nunn (Suso MVR-D Suzuki)	89
8	Marcus Norlen (Suso MVR-D Suzuki)	72
9	Kristian Whatley (NA Robinsons KTM)	74
10	Alex Snow (KTM UK)	68

LORD OF THE RINGS!

THE WTC REGULARS MAKE THE LONG TREK TO JAPAN FOR THE FOURTH ROUND OF THE SERIES AT THE TWIN RING CIRCUIT OF MOTEGI WHERE IT'S 200 NOT OUT FOR FUJIGAS!

A tough trial laid out by championship veteran Takumi Narita at Honda's Twin Ring circuit in Motegi awaits the intrepid explorers who travel to Japan for the fourth round of the FIM World Trials Championship.

Current series leader Toni Bou picks up where he left off at round three in America by taking a popular win on a wet and windy day one – a whopping 27 marks clear of second placed rider Adam Raga. Using the four-stroke Montesa's tractable power to the max, the reigning champ puts the hurt on his competition on a day when most riders' scorecards are full of fives. Finishing lap one 21 marks clear of Raga and lap two six ahead, there is never much doubt who'll be the winner on day one.

Takahisa Fujinami has a steady ride in front of his home fans to finish a safe third – five marks down on Raga but seven up on Dougie Lampkin who finishes fourth on the Beta. The other Brits to make the trip – Michael Brown and James Dabill – fight over ninth place and there's just one dab in it at the end with Brown getting the nod as Dabill bounces back from a disastrous first lap which sees the 2005 Junior world champion score just seven marks less than a maximum.

Day two sees Bou win once more although this time it's a much closer thing as Raga claws back a six-mark first lap deficit to just two by the end of the second lap. Bou remains unrattled though and calmly collects his second win in as many days while Fujinami finishes third behind Raga to notch up his 200th world trial appearance!

The only current competitor to have made even more appearances, Dougie Lampkin, finishes a very safe fourth for the second day on 57 marks lost to notch up his 230th world trial!

Alexz Wigg extends his lead in the Junior championship with a 2-1 scorecard over the weekend. Joined on the podium by fellow Brits Ross Danby and Sam Haslam the Montesa star now has a healthy eight-point lead over Loris Gubian who wins on day one but slips to fourth on Sunday.

In the Youth championship Beta's Jack Challoner also extends his points lead over young American star Patrick Smage who's the first Yank to challenge for a WTC title since the great Bernie Schrieber in 1979.

SERIES STANDINGS

WORLD >>

1	Toni Bou	(ESP – Montesa)	114 points
2	Adam Raga	(ESP – Gas Gas)	99
3	Takahisa Fujinami	(JPN – Montesa)	97
4	Albert Cabestany	(ESP – Sherco)	66
5	Dougie Lampkin	(GB – Beta)	66
6	Jeroni Fajardo	(ESP – Sherco)	66
7	Marc Freixa	(ESP – Gas Gas)	51
8	James Dabill	(GB – Montesa)	48
9	Michael Brown	(GB – Beta)	38
10	Daniel Oliveras	(ESP – Sherco)	29
16	Shaun Morris	(GB – Gas Gas)	6

JUNIOR >>

1	Alexz Wigg	(GB – Montesa)	105 points
2	Loris Gubian	(FRA – Sherco)	97
3	Sam Haslam	(GB – Gas Gas)	83
4	Alfredo Gomez	(ESP – Montesa)	78
5	Ross Danby	(GB – Gas Gas)	75
14	Lee Sampson	(GB – Sherco)	14
22	George Morton	(GBR – Beta)	3
24	James Fry	(GB – Sherco)	1

YOUTH >>

1	Jack Challoner	(GB – Beta)	111 points
2	Patrick Smage	(USA – Sherco)	99
3	Francesc Moret	(FRA – Sherco)	88
4	Alexandre Ferrer	(FRA – Sherco)	71
5	Benoit Dagnicourt	(FRA – Beta)	62
10	Jonathan Richardson	(GB – Sherco)	30
23	Adam Jones	(GB – Sherco)	4
25	Jonathan Walker	(GB – Sherco)	3
28	Jack Thompson	(GB – Sherco)	1



Fujigas notches up his 200th world trial appearance in Japan



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RACE



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JACK'S THE LAD!

THE EAST KENT KID WHO'S FOLLOWING
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF TOMMY SEARLE

GREAT LAKES!

ELITE YOUTH CUP KICKS OFF AT SOUTHPORT

SCOTT ELDERFIELD



SERIES STANDINGS

65cc

1	Ryan Snaith	201 points
2	Ben Green	179
3	Danny Lanfear	168
4	Joe Jeffries	162
5	Alfie Bowtell	160

SW85cc

1	Liam Garland	219 points
2	James Dunn	213
3	Oliver Osmaston	166
4	Ben Watson	145
5	Rickie Roderick	144

BW85cc

1	Brad Pocock	222 points
2	Luke Hawkins	207
3	Jake Page	186
4	Jamie McCanney	177
5	Bryn Clarke	134

SENIOR

1	Christian Taylor	225 points
2	Jamie Houghton	207
3	Ryan Turner	192
4	Jasper Uphill	186
5	Jordan Richards	153

OPEN

1	Scott Elderfield	225 points
2	James Hutchinson	173
3	Lewis Trickett	159
4	Josh Waterman	151
5	Will Worden	138



GREAT LAKES!

ELITE YOUTH CUP KICKS OFF AT SOUTHPORT

Words by Mike Gurney Photos by Ian Roxburgh

Steeped in critical acclaim – and quite rightly so following last year's small but beautifully formed four-round inaugural competition – the Elite Youth Cup is the last of the big schoolie shindigs to spark into life this year.

Worth waiting for? Well I'm sure Scott Elderfield, Brad Pocock, Ryan Snaith, Liam Garland and 125cc two-stroke winner Turbo Taylor all think so as they tame the hellish beast that is the roller coaster of a course at Leisure Lakes near Southport to go away with early championship leads. Leisurely it isn't though as only the brave and good survive with body, soul and front teeth intact as they thrash about in the Lancashire sand.

Scott Elderfield certainly gets to grips with the terrain aboard the Swift Suzuki, blowing everyone away to nail five race wins to put clear water between himself and James Hutchinson who finishes second as a pretty clued-up Open class field tough it out behind. Cracking

performances from 15-year-old Lewis Trickett and the unlucky Josh Waterman all bode well for the next round.

So is it the performance of the weekend from young Mr Elderfield? Not quite! Step forward Bradley Pocock. Brad's been huffing and puffing to magnificent effect all season, whippin' up a frightening storm wherever he's been with lap times to match the best on his thunderously quick and super-trick 150F.

Broken bones and just 12 points in Ireland was a disastrous start to the BYMX season and it just didn't quite click into place early doors. But right now Brad really is right on the case, cooking on gas and the Elite heat is being turned right up! Four race wins and a second place finish for Brad on the weekend is as good a performance as has been carded anywhere on a Big Wheeler all season. Luke Hawkins finishes in second place on the weekend followed by Jake Page who is another guy having a ball this season with a string of gutsy, impressive

performances for the Redline KTM team.

Liam Garland tops the Elite SW pile, getting the better of James Dunn 3-2 on race wins with another typically tenacious performance. And how's this for a corking comeback? After spending the best part of 12 months out with a badly broken leg and with just a handful of meetings so far this year to re-acclimatise, third place in the Elite SW standings with the majority of the big guns in attendance goes to Oliver Osmaston. At just 10 years old a sensational return! Olly isn't 11 until August and this is no flash-in-the-pan performance – he's the real deal and by my reckoning that makes Olly Oz a natural contender for future success.

Ben Green is a class act in the 65s but with his bike constantly losing bits on day two Ryan Snaith steps in to snatch the overall win as Ben limps home seatless in race four and suffers a noise penalty in the final shootout after the silencer goes AWOL. Danny Lanfear, Joe Jeffries and Alfie Bowtell complete the top five.

Ryan Snaith's top tiddler
at Leisure Lakes

JACK'S THE LAD!

EAST KENT'S POCKET ROCKET

Words and photos by still-mx.co.uk

It's always a little unfair to compare one rider to another – especially when the comparison spans a gap of over eight years – but there's a rider coming through the ranks who's having his name etched on the same silverware once held aloft by a young Tommy Searle.

Jack Wilson's riding career started at the age of four when his dad Chris bought a Suzuki LT50 quad which was quickly superseded by a PW50. Even though he'd never ridden a motorcycle, Chris soon realised his boy not only had a lot of natural talent but also thoroughly enjoyed his riding. With that still fresh in his mind to this day, he's been supporting and guiding Jack ever since.

Jack's racing career started just after his sixth birthday and in his first ever race – up against riders that not only had more experience but in some cases were two years older – he grabbed the holeshot and led right up until the last lap when a stumble saw him fall just short of his maiden victory. Putting the fall aside, this was a sure sign of things to come and it wasn't long before two auto championships were in the bag.

Jack was soon competing in the 65s and the form continued with the rookie converting his first race into a win. With Jack now having won three 65 club championships and going from strength to strength, he was given the Rising Star Award by the East Kent club – a trophy that also bears the name of Tommy Searle.

Moving onto 2008 and the success has continued with more landmark achievements including winning the second round of the BYMX championships. Qualifying first, taking three

moto victories and setting three fastest laps in the process was a dominant performance from the little man. The first round at Desertmartin was beset by mechanical gremlins and saw Jack finish back in 13th but his awesome second round performance means he's jumped to fourth overall in the championship and in touching distance of the championship lead. The BSMA Nationals currently see Jack leading after two race wins at Matchams Park and the recent international at Canada Heights was owned by JW101 aboard his KTM.

And nine months on from being introduced to Hanson Racing, Jack's getting to grips with the weaker parts of his riding as well as building on his strengths. The kid's will to succeed is visible in everything he does, whether it be motocross or school work. The guidance of his father means Jack's aware that riding and education are equally important and understands that although motocross is something he'd love to see through to the very top level, it's also a long road in which many things can change.

Sponsors are now keeping Chris' mobile phone busy adding to the help he already gets from Grips of Essex, M Tech, Goldentyre, Scott goggles, Hanson Racing and of course the invaluable support from his mum Jacqui and brother Charlie as well as his grandparents.

So in eight years time will we see another East Kent SSC rider crossing the pond to the home of his hero Ricky Carmichael? Well like I say it's unfair to compare two riders separated by so many years but, if it carries on the way it's going so far for Jack Wilson, who knows...

Small-wheel sensation
Jordan Godwin



There are five wins at Wakes Colne for Connor Walkley

The 2008 season's been scorcher so far for Jack Wilson



BSMA UPDATE!

WALKLEY WALKS IT AT WAKES

Words and photos by Mike Gurney

With the BSMA drawing something of a short straw when it came to shoe-horning their Pirelli-sponsored championship around all the other youth fixtures, the resulting programme with its unfortunate date clashes has been lacking depth in talent – but it's still producing some rattling good racing.

Connor Walkley delivers the stand-out display again with another five race wins at Wakes Colne to head the Senior standings against a mixture of day runners and championship contenders. Alan Pearce takes the honours in the Open section with Luke Dean, Matthew Bayliss and Josh Brine dividing the wins between them in the BWs.

Jordan Godwin has been a sensation this year and he pilots the SW85cc KTM to another overall win with three firsts as he gets the better of Ryan Fellows who claims the other two race wins.

Jack Wilson and Robert Yates have been as good as most in the Junior 65cc division no matter what the code this season. Robert takes the lion's share of the race wins in Essex with three but Jack's better consistency wins the day and he retains his championship lead into the bargain with just one race win. Connor Hughes takes the remaining win on his way to third overall.

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SERIES STANDINGS

65cc

1 Ben Green	437 points
2 Jason Meara	401
3 Robert Yates	377
4 Jack Wilson	376
5 Jay Lamb	342

SW85cc

1 Jordan Godwin	416 points
2 James Dunn	409
3 Michael Eccles	397
4 Callan Cooper	372
5 Corie Southwood	330

BW85cc

1 Luke Hawkins	465 points
2 Ryan Houghton	416
3 Daniel Hutchinson	390
4 Jamie McCanney	376
5 Paul Coates	353

OPEN

1 Joe Gregory	287 points
2 Tommy Fenwick	279
3 Lewis King	268
4 Scott Elderfield	266
5 Lewis Trickett	244

MAX ANSTIE!

THE FLAME-HAIRED BOY WONDER SHOWS SOME DUTCH COURAGE...

After a successful week in Vegas for the World Minis where I took two titles (the Supermini and 85cc 14-16 Mod), had some amazing races with America's best and finished an outstanding third in the 125cc class I was straight on a plane to Europe.

Following a nine-hour flight we were on our way to Holland for the second round of the European championship at Lierop. I was looking forward to this race, it was going to be great to come back to Europe and see all my friends and family and also to see what I was up against for the world round in August.

We had Lionel and Martine, my old Belgian mechanic from last year, helping us out with Rob Rolink doing my engine. The track was looking good and the weather was also looking okay and would stay that way for the remainder of the weekend.

On the Saturday I ended up second in timed training to my Dutch rival Jeffrey Herlings but I was within 0.2 of a second so it was going to be close racing! In the first moto I got off to a good start (it felt weird starting on sand after so long on concrete) and quickly moved into the lead. Jeffrey was right in tow and we were going fast! After the 25-minute plus two lap race I managed to hold off the Dutch rider to take the win – it felt good to come back to Holland and be straight back on top! But the next race was going to be a little more interesting...

Again I got off to a good start and moved to the front pretty fast. Jeffrey was once again tapping on my back wheel when after five laps he disappeared. Another three laps later my dirt scooter exploded! Ha ha! I then found out that Jeffrey's bike had also broken and he would also be getting a DNF. Quite an eventful race with the two leaders' bikes stopping.

Anyways, we discovered that the problem could be resolved easily and the bike would definitely be ready for Rhenen the following Thursday for another play in the sand...

I then spent some time with my mum before travelling back out to the sand of Lommel on the Wednesday, then to Rhenen in Holland the following day. Timed training went well and I took pole position over the Dutch 150cc rider Donny Basjemire.

The first moto started well, I was about fifth around the first corner and quickly found myself out in front. I put my head down and when I looked back up 20 minutes later I was half-a-minute in front of the second place rider. The second moto was much the same, I got out into the lead early and never looked back.

After some supercross training at home in England and many trips up to the US Embassy to get our US visas we were back on a plane to America.

To be continued...

Max



BRAMPTON BLITZ!

MEL AND SCOTT GO BAR-TO-BAR IN CUMBRIA

Words and photo by Mike Gurney

In the strongest Open class youth field assembled so far this year Mel Pocock proves to be the master, looking like a superstar in the making at times as the BYMX series lands at Brampton.

Mel posts the fastest lap times in qualifying and racing and he comes from the back on two occasions to over-power fellow 15-year-old wonder kid Scott Elderfield. Scott leads all three races from the start and powers to the final race win but Mel's performance owes much to the extra pace and shear toughness he's recently gained on the GP circuit.

In the championship stakes Scott's magnificent efforts raise him to fourth place and put him within striking distance of Danger UK's Joe Gregory who hangs on at the top but it's getting oh-so tight. Tommy Fenwick replaces fellow Scot Sean MacDonald in the number two berth with Lewis King still in there with a real shout in third.

With the Junior 65cc championship leader Ryan Snaith crashing out of the meeting in race two, Cumbrian Ben Green takes the opportunity with one race win and three seconds to claim top spot in the championship around a course he knows like the back of his hand. But Robert

Yates with three race wins secures the weekend's tiddler class bragging rights. Jason Meara, Danny Lanfear and Jay Lamb all score heavily with polished performances to bolster their points totals.

It's all change too at the top of the SW85cc standings as with Ben Howell still out injured James Dunn and Jordan Godwin take the championship by the scruff of the neck with two wins and two seconds apiece that ties them on points. James claims the win on the weekend with the last race victory but Jordan now goes top of the table by seven points to keep the Welsh flag flying in Ben's absence.

After the struggle at Leisure Lakes it's a case of normal service resumed for Luke Hawkins who flies around the Maxxis-standard circuit, posting another four race wins to completely underline his Big Wheel dominance. Scotland's Matthew Fleming comes back with a bang on a course he loves to bits to claim second overall on the weekend. Consistency pays dividends yet again for Ryan Houghton as he climbs up to second place in the championship table as fellow Redline runner Jake Page looks super-quick but suffers a weekend of mixed fortunes that drop him further down the table.





MANXCAT!

AFTER THE EXCITEMENT OF MALLORY PARK AND THE BRITISH GP OUR RESIDENT MONSTER HONDA MAN'S KICKING BACK AT THE TT RACES...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photos by Sutty

I'm writing live from the TT paddock on the Isle of Man after randomly deciding last night to come watch my mate Keith (Amor) race [and randomly forgot your column was due – SL]. I kinda owe it to him to come and support him for once since he has been a good 'man friend' to me for so long. He comes training with me, drives hundreds of miles to pick me up from airports or hospitals and loves a road trip or a holiday. I'd never actually been to watch him race so after hovering my mouse button over the confirmation button on the British Airways website I decided to go for it and it was bag-packing time!

I love a quick decision or a spontaneous little trip. I'm not one for being the most organised these days though – with being on CAS and the boys there doing such an awesome job with everything there's not a lot to really think about apart from riding my bike or doing my training. So that's kinda rubbing off on other things. Like when I almost missed my flight to Bulgaria (we'll get to that later though)!

Take this morning for instance. I only just made my flight once again. I was travelling with Keith's friend but since I was so last-minute I was calling him at midnight last night and obviously his phone was off so I was left to think about my timing schedule for leaving – traffic, check in and boarding – all by myself! I figured it would take me 45 minutes to get to the airport, therefore leaving me an hour to check in and board. But seeing the world on the roads at 8am is a new thing for me it took me way over an hour –

I had some knob in a blue VW Polo hogging the outside lane and traffic everywhere.

I got there and went to the nearest car park which is super-expensive just so I could run and check in with the spare 10 minutes I had before it closed! Then I was back in the van and driving to the long stay car park about 56 miles from the actual terminal – and that's when I actually found the f*****g thing! Then I was on the long stay car park bus – which had so kindly waited for me – when I realised I had left my wallet in the van. So the nice bus driver then stopped and let me run back and get it. Luckily there was only one other guy on the bus with me so it wasn't too embarrassing – although I heard him muttering under his breath.

It's a nice wee island though – it looked lovely flying in, the weather is braw and I even saw a dircross track on the side of a hill. We arrived in the paddock via taxicab and there were a few familiar faces around. I even ran into the Maxxis girls from the British championships so we got chatting and I'm hopefully gonna catch up with them tonight!

I headed down to Brae Hill to watch the six seconds of racing as they come down this almost off-camber right hand dip from a steep hill at 170mph! It's insane! I didn't actually realise how mental it is until I was stood there.

Has anyone ever seen the guy on YouTube who has the biggest, longest headshake then stacks it into a wall on a black bike? Well that's the same hill and these boys do not shut off! They bottom the bikes out and the back ends

fish all the way up the next hill! It's crazy – these boys know no fear! Keith is a newcomer to the TT but already he is kicking ass. He was third in the 600 race earlier this week which is pretty hardcore for a newcomer.

So anyways, who enjoyed Mallory? I thought it was the tits! I eat my hat – I was very wrong about the event and Gareth took everything he possibly could into consideration. I liked the way the fans were close to the track again, people were free to cross the track after the races were finished and stuff and it was a very relaxed atmosphere as far as security was concerned which I think is a great thing. People were well behaved, the weather was out and the track was amazing! I loved it! The ruts were so technical and the jumps were cool. Obviously, a lot still needs to happen but I'm defo a fan of Mallory now and I'll be on hand with help and advice to make it better in the future for both riders and spectators. The shows were good, the paddock was clean, the band was cool and a big well done to Justin for building his best track to date.

The weather has been so awesome in Scotland the last month – I've been out riding till nine at night sometimes, we've had a couple of beach parties and eating out in Edinburgh often. Edinburgh is crawling with cute girls in summer!

Our beach party was great. I've always wanted to have a little gathering so we decided to have it for my birthday which was just a few days later. We spent over £100 in Tesco and bought all the usual party treats. I took down a couple crates of Monster too and we had a good



turn out – we even pulled some random dog walkers over to sample our cooking! All the pics are on my myspace – it was really cool having the weather with us for once and if you see the pics you wouldn't believe it's Scotland!

I've been doing a lot of riding with Brad and Bry recently. Whenever we go out we start it as a race and we race each other for 40 minutes which helps keep me occupied and my concentration up because I think that is why I am making mistakes during races.

Guitar Hero has been amazing recently. I've completed 22 songs on hard now and defeated all the dudes in battle! So get online and look out for me – my username is billymac211 – and we'll have a battle!

So, yeah, Bulgaria has been my worst GP to date. Nothing went right that weekend. I almost missed my flight – well I actually did miss it but they pulled all the strings for me to get on but unfortunately my bag went missing and still hasn't been returned so that's that lost forever! I had to borrow gear off the Suzuki Swift guys so thanks Elliot and Jake for that. Luckily I had a couple of sets of my actual race gear in the truck so I made it through the weekend just!

Oh and special mention to the 'speshal' people in CAS who Harry let's come along to help clean the toilets and empty the bins – their names are Paul Teasdale and Andy Pringle. You're doing a really great job guys and you'll get another gold star next week. Clap, clap!

Right, I'm off to enjoy the delights of the road racing paddock...



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